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Bp. SHERLOCK's

DISCOURSES.

VOL. V.

DISCOURSES

PREACHED ON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

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By the Right Reverend Father in God,

THOMAS SHERLOCK, D.D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON,

AND

MASTER OF THE TEMPLE.

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TO THE

READER.

THESE Sermons, preached on important Occaſions, were ſeparately publiſhed by their excellent Author, the late Biſhop of *London*, Dr. THOMAS SHERLOCK.

The judicious Reader will diſcover in them the ſame Energy of Sentiment and Purity of Diction, the ſame pious Intention to promote Virtue and true Religion, the ſame pathetic and convincing Ad-

dreſs to the Heart, which ſo eminently diſtinguiſh the reſt of this Prelate's Diſcourſes.

Dr. SHERLOCK no ſooner appeared in the great World, than he gave evident Proofs of the Extent of his Learning and the Superiority of his Genius. It has been Matter of Doubt with ſome good Judges of Style, whether the firſt of theſe Sermons, which he preached above ſeventy Years ſince, when a young Man, has been excelled, either in Language or Matter, by any that he delivered from the Pulpit afterwards.

There is not, perhaps, a more difficult Taſk, than the doing Juſtice

tice to a great and exalted Character. We ſhall not, therefore, preſume to draw a Portrait of Biſhop SHERLOCK; but will juſt obſerve, that his Views, both in civil and religious Matters, were always large and comprehenſive, not confined to the narrow Syſtems of particular Parties, nor ſubjected to the fluctuating Principles of powerful and intereſted Men: that he was a moſt ſtrenuous and able Defender of the great Truths of our holy Religion: that he made it his conſtant Practice to inculcate the chriſtian and ſocial Virtues; to enforce a due and ready Submiſſion to the Laws; to inſpire Prince and People with a Senſe of their reſpective Duties, and to diſcountenance all tempo-

rary Changes and hafty Innovations in Church and State.

The Re-publication of theſe Diſcourſes has been ſo long and earneſtly wiſhed for, that we cannot doubt of their Acceptance with the Public, as the *Fifth* and laſt Volume of Biſhop SHERLOCK's Sermons.

1775. *D. D.*

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DISCOURSE I.

PROV. XXIV. 21.

My Son, Fear thou the Lord and the King; and meddle not with them that are given to change.

THE Fear of God, and of the King, are joined together in Scripture, to ſhew the Dependence one has upon the other. The only laſting Foundation of civil Obedience, is the Fear of God; and the trueſt Intereſt of Princes, is to maintain the Honour of Religion, by which they ſecure their own. The Advantage of Religion to all public Societies and civil Governments, is ſo plain and viſible, that ſome have ſuſpected it to be the only End of Religion; which they allow to be an excellent Contrivance of State, a proper Remedy for the

turbulent Humours and Paſſions of Men. And though we acknowledge nobler and better Ends of Religion, which reſpect another world; yet we muſt, with Thankfulneſs to its Divine Author, own it to be excellently adapted to the temporal Felicity of private Men, and public Societies; *Righteouſneſs exalteth a Nation, but Sin is the Reproach of any People.*

If we look into the Hiſtory of former Times, we ſhall find the firſt Symptoms of Ruin and Deſtruction have appeared in the diſſolute Lives of the People, and a general Contempt of ſacred Things. Irreligion naturally tends to Diſorder and Confuſion; for all civil and moral Duties are founded in the Principles of Religion; which once overthrown, nothing remains but pure Force and Power, to reſtrain the unruly Appetites of Men: a Way of governing neither ſafe to the Prince, nor eaſy to the People; and therefore can never laſt long. Duties, which flow from fixed and ſettled Principles, muſt always be the ſame; the Obligation ariſing from them unalterable; from the Practice of which, will follow Order and Regularity. But Intereſt and Paſſion are in continual Motion, and liable

to

to infinite Changes; and Men who ſteer by them, can hold no ſteady Courſe of Action, but muſt be *given to change*, as often as they are out of Humour, or think the preſent State of Things not proper to ſerve their Turn. Therefore nothing but a religious Senſe of our Duty to God, and to our Governors, his Miniſters on Earth, can keep us conſtant and upright in our Obedience. *Fear God and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change.*

I ſhall not conſider the Duty of fearing God, any farther than as the Obedience due to our Superiors on Earth is included in it; and ſhall therefore confine myſelf to the following Particulars; To conſider,

Firſt, What Obedience to our Governors is enjoined by the Law of God.

Secondly, How inconſiſtent with this Obedience the Practice of thoſe men is, who *are given to change*.

Firſt, What Obedience to our Governors is enjoined by the Law of God.

Obedience is ſeen chiefly in three Things:

1*ſt*, In Submiſſion to the Laws and Commands of our Princes.

2*dly*, In Honour and Reverence to their Perſons and Government.

3*dly*, In defending them, when any Danger threatens them or the Public.

The firſt and principal Inſtance of Obedience, is Submiſſion to the Laws and Commands of our Princes. To determine the Original of civil Power, or how the Prince's Right to the Obedience of the Subject firſt began, is neither eaſy, nor at this Time neceſſary. But whatever the Original of Government has been, or upon what Account ſoever lawful Authority has been gained; upon the ſame, Obedience becomes due. At the Time our Saviour appeared in the World, various were the Forms of Government in it, and different the Degrees of Power that were exerciſed by Rulers over different Countries; none of which were either leſſened or increaſed by the divine Law, but all pronounced to be the Ordinance of God; and Obedience to all exacted under the Penalty of diſobeying God, the Original of all Power and Authority. *For he that reſiſteth, reſiſteth the Ordinance of God; and they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves Damnation.*

But ſince the Nature of Obedience is no where determined by the Law of God, but only the Practice of it commanded; ſome other

other Rule there muſt be, to judge of the Extent of our Duty. As in moral Virtues, the Light of Nature and right Reaſon inform us what is Temperance, Sobriety, and the like; and therefore theſe Virtues are commanded in Scripture, and, in moſt Caſes, Men left to their natural Notions of Good and Evil, to diſtinguiſh between the Virtue and the Vice; ſo likewiſe muſt the Acts of Obedience, which the Law of God commands, be explained and defined by ſome other Rule. When the *Jews* put that captious Queſtion to our Saviour, *Whether it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæſar, or no*; he gave no new Directions, but judged them out of their own Mouths by the known Rules of Government: for they having owned the Coin of the Country to bear *Cæſar's* Image and Superſcription, a manifeſt Token of *their* Subjection and *his* Sovereignty; he determined, *Render therefore unto Cæſar the Things which are Cæſar's.* Agreeable to which is the Apoſtle's Rule, *Tribute to whom Tribute is due.* Our Saviour took it not upon him to determine the civil Right of *Cæſar*; but the Right appearing, Obedience and Compliance he commanded. The Rights of Princes are not determined

in Scripture; and therefore in Queſtions of Right, the Scripture is no Rule.

The Meaſure then of Power and Authority muſt be the Rule of Obedience: whatever the Prince can lawfully command, the Subject is bound to obey. The *things which are God's muſt be rendered unto God*; and therefore no divine Law, declared either by the clear Light of Nature, or expreſs Revelation, can be ſuperſeded by the Command of any earthly Power. Which, whenever it is the Caſe, we muſt obey God rather than Man; and be content with the Lot of them who ſuffer for Well-doing. To reaſon abſtractedly upon the Power of Princes, is a Sign of Weakneſs, as well as of a troubleſome Temper. Cuſtom, and the Law of the Land in each Country, are in this Caſe the higheſt Reaſon; under which Regulations, the Power of all Princes is lawful and reaſonable. Were it otherwiſe, the Goſpel, which was intended for the Law of all Nations and People, could not have commanded Obedience to the preſent Powers, which were in Form and Authority vaſtly different.

All Obedience is primarily owing to God, the Fountain of all Power: and ſhould it pleaſe him to take upon himſelf the

the perſonal Government of Nations; as he did ſometime of the People of the *Jews*; all other Power would ceaſe of courſe. In the *Jewiſh* Government, the Laws of civil and eccleſiaſtical Polity were Divine; being eſtabliſhed by God, when he took upon himſelf the external Government of that People. But where God did not ſo viſibly intereſt himſelf, but committed the Reins of Government to earthly Princes; the making Laws for the external and viſible Order of the World was remitted to their Authority. And therefore the Goſpel, though infinitely more perfect than the Law, gave us no Syſtem of Laws, either for civil or eccleſiaſtical Government: which under the Law were ordained by God (not as ſupreme Governor of the World, but as the immediate and viſible Governor of the *Jews*); but under the Goſpel, are left to Princes, who are appointed by God to be the viſible Governors of the World; and therefore all viſible and external Order is their proper Care and Buſineſs. Of *Obedience* there are two Parts; the external, and internal. The external conſiſts in the outward Conformity of our Actions to the Rules and Principles of Virtue; the internal, in

the Sincerity and Purity of the Heart. The Government of the World is not concerned in the internal Part; for if Men act as if they were honeſt, the Peace and outward Order of the World will be ſecured, though their Hearts are perverſe; and therefore, the Judgment of this, God, as he alone is able for it, has reſerved to himſelf. The external Part of *Obedience* is that, in the due Performance of which the Beauty and Order of the World conſiſts; and therefore this is the proper Care of the Governors of the World. The ſame holds in Religion, which is the Service of God: there are Duties which none are concerned in, but God and our own Souls; ſuch as Faith, Repentance, and the like; the Virtue of which is internal, of the Heart. But God requires likewiſe an external and viſible Worſhip from us, in which outward Order and Decency are *required*, but not *determined*, and therefore muſt be left to their Juriſdiction, to whom we are anſwerable for our outward Behaviour in all Things. How far miſtaken then is the Zeal of thoſe, who decline ſubmitting to the Orders of the Church, becauſe they are of human Appointment! Whereas being ordained by a lawful

lawful Power, they have ſo far the Stamp of Divine Authority, as to make Diſobedience to them a Sin againſt God.

The ſecond Inſtance of Obedience, is to honour and reverence our Governors; to think with Reſpect, and ſpeak with Decency of their Perſons and Governments. This Duty we owe to all our Superiors, in proportion to their Dignity and Office. If we look up to the Fountain and Original of all Power, the Supreme Governor of the World; his *Name*, even *to mention in vain, ſhall not be held guiltleſs*. Next to him, though the Diſtance be great, are the ſupreme Powers on Earth; to whom we owe the greateſt *civil* Reſpect and Reverence; according to the Apoſtle's Rule, to *render Honour, to whom Honour*; *Fear, to whom Fear* is due: whoſe Names or Perſons to treat with Contempt, is Want of Decency, as well as Duty. Two Things have a Right to Honour and Reſpect; perſonal Virtues, and public Characters; which when happily joined together, are to be accounted *worthy of double Honour*: but when ſeparate, are not to be defrauded of their due Portion. When St *Paul*, provoked by the unjuſt Uſage of the High-prieſt, returned him a rude

rude Anſwer; being informed what Place he held in the Commonwealth, he corrected, and excuſed his Error; *I wiſt not, Brethren, that he was the High-prieſt: for it is written, Thou ſhalt not ſpeak evil of the Ruler of thy People.*

The third Inſtance of Obedience, is in defending the Perſons and Government of our Princes.

Mutual Defence is the End of all Government. Protection in Life and Fortune, is the Right of every Subject: which, as he may lawfully expect from his Prince; ſo is he bound to him, in the like Duty of defending his Perſon and Government, whenever Occaſion requires. When Men entered into civil Society, they reſigned all their private Right and Intereſt, even in their own Lives, to the public Good: and therefore the public Happineſs is to be preferred before our own; the Life of the Public, which conſiſts in maintaining the eſtabliſhed Form of Government, to be ſupported, though with the Loſs of our own. The Prince bears the Perſon of the Commonwealth; by him the Public lives and acts; therefore is his Life ſacred: which *but* coldly to defend is Want of Affection to the Public,

lic, and Treaſon againſt the original Laws of all Government. And if the ſenſe of Honour be not mightily changed, to die for our Prince or our Country, is to fall with Glory, and challenges Reſpect to our Memory from all Poſterity.

To maintain the eſtabliſhed Form of Government, is the firſt and higheſt Duty of Men acting in Society. To remove the ancient Land-marks of Power and Obedience, tends to the utter Ruin and Deſtruction of all Government; and is an Injury to the Prince, as well as Diſobedience to his Power; who acquires a perſonal Right and Intereſt in the Privileges deſcending with the Crown. But this will more properly fall under the ſecond Head; which was to conſider,

How inconſiſtent with Obedience required, the Practice of thoſe Men is, *who are given to change.*

No Government was ever ſo perfectly formed at firſt, as to anſwer all Occaſions: the Wiſdom of Man not reaching far enough to view all the poſſible Variety of Circumſtances, that may require the mitigating, or increaſing the Severity of old Laws; or the making new. Therefore it

is

is neceſſary for the public Good, that there ſhould be a Power lodged ſomewhere, to adapt old Laws to the preſent Circumſtances, or thoſe which may hereafter ariſe. Thus to change, is an Act of lawful Power; and therefore falls not within the Charge of the Text, *Not to meddle with them that are given to change.*

But then the moſt beneficial and neceſſary Changes muſt be begun, promoted, and perfected by lawful Authority; or elſe they loſe their good Quality, and, like wholeſome Remedies unduly applied, prey upon the Vitals of the Government. For no Change can be ſo beneficial in its Conſequence, as uſurping upon lawful Authority is deſtructive; and therefore it becomes a good Subject to bear any Inconvenience ariſing from the preſent Conſtitution, rather than, by too precipitately throwing it off, to prevent the regular Methods of Alteration. To pretend public Good, is common to all Factions and Parties; and therefore can excuſe none: and where the Pretence is real; yet to ſeek public Good, in Oppoſition to public Authority, is like curing Diſtempers by deſtroying the Patient.

To view with Pleaſure the Factions and Diſturb-

Diſturbances of a Kingdom; and, like the Lame and Impotent at the Pool of *Bethesda*, to long for the troubling of the Waters, that we may firſt ſtep in, and make ſome private Advantage of the public Calamities, is neither the Part of a good Man, or a good Chriſtian.

To encourage the ſeditious Principles and Practices of others; though cunning Men may do it without Danger, yet they can never do it without Guilt.

Theſe Practices need not be brought near, to be compared with the Duty of Obedience. They appear at firſt Sight to have nothing leſs in them than Honour and Reverence, or Obedience to the Prince.

The Authority of the Prince is as much concerned in maintaining the Honour and Order of God's Service, as of his own: and the nobleſt Character that belongs to Princes, is, that of *nurſing Fathers and Mothers* to the Church of Chriſt; the Peace and Order of which is at once the Splendor and Security of a Government: and therefore the Advice of the Text, *Not to meddle with them who are given to change*, muſt be extended to the Government of the Church, as well as of the State. And the Occaſion

of

of this Solemnity gives but too much Reaſon for this Application; the Alterations intended and practiſed upon the Church, influencing not a little in the barbarous Treaſon which we this Day lament.

There muſt in the Church, as in the State, be a Power to change whatever, through Uſe and Experience, appears unfit for the End it was deſigned. To propoſe and procure Amendments to the Laws of the Church, when there is Occaſion for it, is their Duty in whoſe Hands the Power is lodged; and Changes ſo effected, can never be to the Blemiſh or Diſhonour of the Church. But when Men diſlike without Reaſon, and obſtinately condemn whatever has been ſettled by Authority; when they diſclaim the Power and all the Acts of the Church; either their Ignorance muſt be invincible, or their Guilt unpardonable.

The Reaſon of all Changes ought to be very plain and apparent; leſt Lightneſs and Wantonneſs, in altering old Laws, bring Power and Authority into Contempt. To change is the Effect, and the Sign of Weakneſs: and therefore it is the Character of the moſt perfect Being, that in him is no *Variableneſs, or Shadow of turning.*

Often

Often to change, will *always* breed Contempt: and therefore, in private Life, wiſe Men chooſe rather to bear ſome Inconveniencies ariſing from the Way they are ſettled in, than, by ſhifting from one Courſe to another, to gain little but the Character of Unſteadineſs, and Want of Reſolution. Much leſs ſhould public Bodies hazard their Credit by unneceſſary Changes; and, for the Sake of removing one unpoliſhed Stone, endanger the whole Building; which how it will ſettle on a new Foundation, the Wiſdom of Man cannot foreſee. Some Inconveniencies in the Eſtabliſhment of public Societies, like ſome Diſtempers in the Body, are borne with leſs Danger than they are cured.

To plead for Alterations of ſeemingly greater Purity and Perfection, carries with it ſuch an Appearance of Goodneſs and Concern for the Service of God, as will never fail to engage the Favour of the Multitude; who always make up in Zeal what they want in Knowledge; which is, and will be a Temptation to Men, who are incapable of a better, to take this Way to raiſe themſelves in the Eſteem of the People.

To preſs for Alterations when moſt

Things

Things in the preſent Eſtabliſhment are owned to be good, and all tolerable, is not the Effect of much Judgment. If Want of Perfection be a Reaſon to change, it will be a Reaſon for ever; for ſince all the Laws of the Church are not of divine Inſtitution, they have too great a Mixture of Weakneſs in their Original, ever to be perfect in themſelves. And ſhould all the Changes deſired, be granted, let not Men imagine that the next Age will be ſo unlike this, as not to find Fault with the Orders of their Superiors.

It is unaccountable in Reaſon, that, in Matters of religious Government, every Man thinks himſelf judge of what is decent and convenient, and what fit to be obeyed; whereas in Matters of civil Government, whatever they act, they dare not pretend to the ſame diſcretionary Power: as if the Caſe were not the ſame in both; and Obedience in all Things lawful and honeſt, (further than which, no Man's private Judgment extends) in both of like Neceſſity.

How the common People are led into the Eſteem of Men thus acting, is not hard to ſay. To ſuffer for one's Opinion, right

or

or wrong, is in the Eyes of the Vulgar meritorious: and ſince ſome outward Advantages are forfeited, by not complying with the preſent Eſtabliſhment; ſhould Men, even for worldly Intereſt, and Want of Merit ſufficient to riſe in the lawful and regular Way, ſtrike out new Paths for themſelves; yet they ſhall be ſure, among their Followers, to have the Character of honeſt Men, Men ſuffering for Conſcience ſake. And though there be no Suffering in the Caſe; no Puniſhment attending upon ſuch Practices; yet whilſt Rewards are open to the Obedience of others, the partiality of Men will make them apter to repine at the Diſtinction, than to be thankful for the Impunity.

As long as Men are weak enough to be miſled; and the Errors of ſome are profitable to others; there will be no End of Diſſenſions: and ſhould the Reſtleſſneſs and Importunity of Men once break in upon the Conſtitution, the Event could only ſhew where it would end.

To what Extremes the Humour of Men once ſet on changing will run, the mournful Occaſion of this Day's Meeting is too ſenſible a Proof. The Actors in the late

Troubles thought of nothing leſs, when they began, than the Event that ſucceeded. The Good of the Public, and of the King, was the Pretence; and they never left ſeeking it, till they had ruined the Public, and laid *His* Royal Head low. With the ſame good Succeſs, the Purity of the Church was promoted; which ended in utter Subverſion, and the Blood of a great Prelate.

Great indeed in many Reſpects; but he ſunk under the Iniquity of the Times, by endeavouring to give Life to the long-forgotten and neglected Diſcipline of the Church; when the Liberty and Licentiouſneſs of the Age could bear nothing leſs. The Reformation had given ſuch a Turn to weak Heads, that had not Weight enough to poiſe themſelves between the Extremes of Popery and Fanaticiſm; that every thing older than Yeſterday was looked upon to be Popiſh and Antichriſtian: the meaneſt of the People aſpired to the Prieſthood; and were readier to frame new Laws for the Church, than obey the old. This led him to ſome Acts of great Severity, that he might create an Authority, and Reverence for the Laws, when it ſhould appear they had not quite loſt their Edge. Thus he became

became too generally hated, and fall he muſt; for his Faults were great, and, as the Times went, unpardonable; he loved the *Church* and the *King*.

His Caſe might deſerve more to be lamented, did not that which followed, bury all private Injuries and Reſentments; in reſpect of which, the former *Cruelties were tender Mercies*. The Thirſt of Blood was too great, to be ſatisfied with the Fall of private Men; nor could the new Schemes of Confuſion take place, till the Fountain of lawful Power and Authority was dried up. Every Man had a Project of his own for a new Government; and rather than be diſappointed, they reſolved to lay the Foundation in royal Blood.

Could all the Obligations of Nature and Religion have prevailed, the King might have lived to make his People happy; but the Misfortune was, they had injured him too much, to truſt him even with his own Life; nor could their Conſciences give them Security for the Miſchiefs already done, but in going on ſtill to add Murder and Parricide, and in deſtroying the Power, they had too much Reaſon to fear. A barbarous Cruelty! of which it is hard to ſay, whe-

ther the Malice and Wickedneſs, with which it was acted, were greater; or the Patience and Magnanimity, with which it was borne. As if the Conteſt had been, whether human Nature were capable of greater Degrees of Virtue, or Vice.

View the King from the Throne to the Scaffold; and he was in his Life the Pattern of a good Prince; in his Death, of a good Chriſtian. He was a Prince, who, from the Sweetneſs of his Temper, the Integrity of his Intentions, and a kind and tender Concern for the meaneſt of his Subjects, might well have expected to make his Name dear to this Nation, and his Memory glorious, upon a better Account than the Hiſtory of this Day affords. He was formed by Nature and Grace to be an Ornament of better Times; and wanted nothing to make him great in the worſt, thoſe he lived in, but a juſt Reſentment of the Indignities he ſuffered. The only Prerogative his Enemies had left him, was to forgive the Injuries they did him; which he exerciſed to the laſt; and, in the Heat of a mercileſs Rebellion, could never forget his Enemies were his Subjects, when they had long ſince forgot him to be their King; which was

too

too great a Bias upon the Minds of indifferent Men, when they ſaw the only Way to eſcape being puniſhed, was to take the Courſe that deſerved it.

They, who conſider the happy and envied Condition of our Government, in which are equally ſecured, the Dignity of the Prince, and Liberty of the Subject; the Bleſſing of a Church eſtabliſhed in primitive Purity, wherein the Honour of Religion and God's Service is maintained without Superſtition; Obedience taught without Blindneſs; can never ſufficiently reverence the Memory of a Prince, who choſe rather to lay down his Crown and his Life, than not deliver down theſe Bleſſings inviolable to Poſterity. They, who remember him, without any partial Affection, muſt allow him the Character of a noble and generous Prince, and Father of his Country. They, who think with Envy, and ſpeak with Malice, of him, can ſay no worſe, than, *He was a Man of like Paſſions with us.* And ſurely they forget themſelves to be Men, who would have our *common* Infirmities remembered to *his* Diſhonour.

The Caſe is hard, if Princes have no Right to the Allowances made to all beſides: harder, becauſe, by their high Station, they

are more expoſed to the View of the World; and few there are ſo modeſt, as not to think themſelves wiſe enough to judge of their Actions. Private Perſons have their Inclinations free from all Checks and Reſtraints, more than Innocence and Religion require: their Rule is, to preſerve Integrity, and it will preſerve them. But Men of Character have this further Care, *That their God be not evil ſpoken of:* a Leſſon of infinitely more Difficulty, and greater Toil, by how much harder it is to pleaſe *Men* than *God.* To ſeek the good Opinion of the People, is Prudence in Men of public Characters: but is there a greater Slavery under the Sun, than to be obliged to live by the Opinion of thoſe, who are neither wiſe enough to judge, nor to let it alone?

The Privilege that extends to the meaneſt Cottage, to chooſe their own Friends and Companions, is not without murmuring allowed to Kings: nor will it be permitted to the Dignity of ſome Characters, and Majeſty of others, to ſtoop even to the innocent and harmleſs Enjoyments of Life: as if Princes and great Miniſters had no *private* Cares; but were capable of the conſtant Thoughts of public Buſineſs, and Religion. Every

Step

Step Men take, by which they riſe into the View of the World, is an Abridgement of their innocent Liberty, and binds them to a ſtricter and ſeverer Self-denial. For there is a natural Envy in Men, which loves to ſee the Honour and Dignity of great Places, qualified with Trouble and Anxiety.

But Men who are diſtinguiſhed by the Advantages of Birth and Education, ſhould be above the common Prejudices and ſordid Paſſions of the Vulgar; and think themſelves obliged, in Honour as well as Duty, to pay a ſteady and regular Obedience to the Government. It is ſome Excuſe for the Diſhonour of the Nation, in the late Rebellion, that we can ſhew ſo brave a Liſt of Nobility and Gentry, who fell in Defence of their King; and left the Honour of their Death, a nobler Inheritance to their Families, than their Lands and Eſtates. The Imitation of their Virtue and Obedience need not to be preſſed in *this* Audience; where the Rules of Duty and Honour are better practiſed, than they can be taught. The noble Families have Examples of their own, to inſtruct them how *they* ſhould behave themſelves to their Prince and their Country: and in the Hiſtory of their Anceſtors,

may learn, that *Loyalty to the Crown*, is the firſt and the nobleſt Title of Honour. And ſurely thus much Good we may expect from the Evil of the late Times; that Men would learn at length to value the Bleſſing of a good Prince.

It is the Goodneſs of God to us, that, after ſo many Convulſions, we ſtill enjoy our ancient Government; that there is ſtill Life and Vigour in the Religion and Liberty of *England:* a Goodneſs that on our Part requires the utmoſt Returns of Gratitude; which can no way be ſo acceptably ſhewn, as in the worthy Uſe of the Bleſſings we enjoy. We ſhall but ill perform the Duty of this Day, unleſs we amend in ourſelves the Errors we reprove in others. The *Crown* and the *Virtues* of the royal Martyr are once more joined together; let not then our Reproach be renewed by the repeated Want of Obedience and Affection. If, whilſt our Governors watch with Care and Solicitude, to make us eaſy and happy in ourſelves; ſtrong and ſecure againſt our Enemies abroad; we labour to diſturb the Methods of our Government at Home; we muſt thank ourſelves for the Evils, which will always follow from the turbulent Humours, and diſtracted Counſels

ſels of a Nation. We have an *Enemy* ſtrong and cunning to deal with; an ancient *Rival* of the Power and Honour of *England*; an Enemy to the *Religion* of Proteſtants, and the *Liberty* of Mankind: and if nothing elſe will, yet Intereſt would prevail with us to unite for our mutual Safety; and whilſt our brave Countrymen expoſe their Lives to the Hazard and Fortune of War *Abroad*, in Defence of their Prince, and their Country; methinks the leaſt that can be expected of us, is to be quiet and peaceable at *Home*. To ſave the ſinking Liberties of *Europe*, is worthy a Queen of *England*; and if the Spirit of our Fathers be not degenerate in us, it will, it muſt riſe to check the Progreſs of an ambitious Monarch; and it will ever be the Choice of an *Engliſhman*, rather to die by his *Sword*, than live by his *Law:* but our *Lives* and *Fortunes* are ſafe in the Conduct and Prudence of our Governors; we need only ſacrifice our *ill Humours*, to the Peace and Security of our Country; and be content to *ſtand ſtill and ſee the Salvation of the Lord.* Let us at leaſt be *willing* to be ſaved; and, for the Sake and Defence of our Religion, ſubmit to live by the Rules of it. We have been long fight-

fighting and contending for our Religion; it is now high Time to practiſe it; and a better Foundation we cannot lay than in the Duties of the Text, *To fear the Lord, and the King, and not to meddle with them that are given to change.*

DISCOURSE II.

MATTHEW X. 41, 42.

He that receiveth a Prophet, in the Name of a Prophet, ſhall receive a Prophet's Reward: And he that receiveth a righteous Man, in the Name of a righteous Man, ſhall receive a righteous Man's Reward.

And whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little Ones, a Cup of cold Water only, in the Name of a Diſciple, verily, I ſay unto you, he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his Reward.

TOWARDS the Beginning of this Chapter we read, that our Saviour ſent forth his Diſciples to preach the Kingdom of God. That they might preach with Authority, he endowed them with Power from above,

above, and with the manifold Gifts of the Spirit. That they might attend upon their Miniſtry without Diſtraction, he eaſed them of the Care of providing for themſelves; and gave them Power to demand and receive of thoſe under their Inſtruction, whatever their Wants required. *Provide*, ſays he, *neither Gold, nor Silver, nor Braſs in your Purſes; nor Scrip for your Journey, neither two Coats, neither Shoes, nor yet Staves; for the Workman is worthy of his Meat*, v. 9, 10. Or as St. *Luke* expreſſes it, *The Labourer is worthy of his Hire*, ch. x. 7. This Reaſon ſhews the true Senſe of the Precept; that it was not meant to take from them the Neceſſaries and Conveniencies of Life, or to make Poverty a Part of their Profeſſion; but only to diſcharge them of the Care and Solicitude of providing for themſelves; for they had a Right to be provided for, by thoſe whom they ſerved in the Goſpel: *For the Labourer is worthy of his Hire.*

And this further appears to be the Senſe of this Precept in *Luke* xxii. 35. *And he ſaid unto them, When I ſent you without Purſe, and Scrip, and Shoes, lacked ye any Thing? And they ſaid, Nothing.* Had it been

been his Intent to make Poverty a neceſſary Qualification for the Miniſtry, he would not have aſked this Queſtion, or received this Anſwer. But ſo little did he intend it, that his Care ſupplied the Want of theirs throughout their Journey, and enlarged the Hearts of the People towards them: ſo that their Poverty was turned into Plenty; and they preached the Goſpel, without the Incumbrance of worldly Cares, *as having Nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all Things.*

As the Office of preaching the Goſpel was to be perpetual in the Chriſtian Church, ſo this Right of Maintenance was for ever to attend it; for the *Lord ordained,* as St. *Paul* tells us, *that they which preach the Goſpel ſhould live of the Goſpel,* 1 Cor. ix. 14. A Right on one Side infers a Duty on the other: if the Miniſters of the Goſpel have a Right to be provided for, it is the Duty of the Faithful to provide for them; but the Proportion of this Maintenance being no where determined, but Men left to give as their Circumſtances enable them, and as their Love and Honour for the Miniſtry incline them; what is given upon this Account, comes to be conſidered as a Charity freely offered, rather than as a Debt duly diſcharged:

diſcharged: and as ſuch, our Saviour has promiſed to accept and reward it. And ſince in this Kind of Charity the Honour of his Name, and the promoting his Religion, are moſt immediately conſulted, he has diſtinguiſhed it from all others by a more honourable and glorious Reward; *He that receiveth a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, ſhall receive a Prophet's Reward*, &c. John xi. 12.

To *receive a Prophet*, ſometimes ſignifies to receive his Doctrine, and to become his Follower or Diſciple; but in this Place it cannot ſignify ſo, for theſe two Reaſons:

Firſt, Our Saviour himſelf diſtinguiſhes this Reception of a Prophet from the other Reception, which is obeying and hearkening to his Voice, in the 14th Verſe: *Whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear your Words; when you depart out of that Houſe, or City, ſhake off the Duſt of your Feet.* Had the ſame Thing been intended by *receiving* and *hearing* a Prophet, the Words would have been thus connected: Whoſoever ſhall not receive you, *and* hear your Words; but the diſjunctive Particle *nor*, ſhews that they are here ſpoken of as different Things. The 11th Verſe, compared with this 14th, will determine

determine what is meant in this Place by receiving a Prophet: *Into whatſoever City or Town ye ſhall enter, enquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence,* v. 11. In the 14th it follows, *Whoſoever ſhall not receive you,* &c. that is, to *abide* with them; which Abode implies, not only Houſe-room, but a Supply of ſuch other Neceſſaries as their Circumſtances required; for it was to anſwer the Want of Gold and Silver, and ſuch other Things as they were expreſsly forbidden to provide for themſelves.

The ſecond Reaſon may be collected from the laſt Verſe of the Text: *And whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little Ones, a Cup of cold Water only, in the Name of a Diſciple; verily, I ſay unto you, he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his Reward.* It is manifeſt that our Saviour here ſpeaks of giving a *Cup of cold Water only,* as the loweſt Degree of that Virtue which he was then recommending; for to ſhew how acceptable an Offering it would be to God, to receive a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, he adds, that even a Cup of cold Water given in the Name of a Diſciple, ſhould not loſe its Reward. To receive a Prophet, therefore, and

to

to give a Cup of cold Water to a Diſciple, are Acts of the ſame Kind, though differing in Degree; and conſequently to receive a Prophet in this Place, is not an Act of Faith or Obedience, but of Charity and Beneficence.

To receive a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, is to receive him becauſe he is a Prophet; upon Account of his Character and Office, and near Relation which he bears to Chriſt. To be kind to our Friends and Relations, and to adminiſter Relief to the extreme Neceſſities and Sufferings of our Fellow-Creatures, is, in ſome Degree, to comply with the Cravings of Nature in ourſelves, and to provide for our own Eaſe and Enjoyment: for the Pity and Compaſſion, which miſerable Objects raiſe in us, are attended with a Pain and Uneaſineſs to ourſelves, no otherwiſe to be allayed, but by relieving the Miſery that cauſed them. But when we relieve the Members of Chriſt, becauſe of the Relation they bear to him, we act then in the Spirit of true Chriſtian Charity; and ſhew ourſelves to be lively Parts of his Body: *Rejoicing with them that do rejoice*, and ſuffering with thoſe who ſuffer.

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The Excellency of Chriſtian Charity is derived from this Dignity of its Object. In Morality we can riſe no higher than to conſider Men as Men, as Partakers of the ſame common Nature with ourſelves; and the natural Senſe we have of Miſery, is the Foundation of our Tenderneſs and Compaſſion towards others. In this Caſe, the Regard we have for others is derived from ourſelves; and our Love and Compaſſion bear a Proportion to the Relation that is between us and them: our Children ſhare as largely in our Affections, as they do in our Blood: next to them, our Relations and Friends have the Preference: and in all Caſes, the Love of ourſelves is the Fountain from which our Love to others is derived. But Chriſtian Charity flows from another Spring: here all the Affections terminate in Chriſt; and we know no other Relation but that which is derived from him, who is *Head over the whole Family*. And as the Love of Chriſt is the Source of Chriſtian Charity, ſo is it the Meaſure of it too; and the Rule by which we muſt adjuſt our Love and Charity to others; he is our neareſt Relation, who is neareſt related to Chriſt; and is therefore the moſt immediate Object

of our Love and Charity. *He that receiveth you*, ſays our Bleſſed Lord to his Apoſtles, *receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me.* Then follow immediately the Words which I have now read to you, for the *Subject* of this Diſcourſe.

In treating on which, I beg Leave to obſerve to you,

Firſt, The ſeveral Degrees of Charity mentioned in them; and wherein the Excellency of one above the other conſiſts.

Secondly, How truly Chriſtian, and excellent in its Kind, that Charity is, which is the End and Deſign of this annual Solemnity.

I. If we begin our Account at the Verſe immediately preceding the Text, we ſhall find four Degrees of Charity enumerated, and diſtinguiſhed from each other, by the ſeveral and diſtinct Promiſes made to them. The firſt is, That of receiving an Apoſtle: *He that receiveth you, receiveth me.* The ſecond, That of receiving a Prophet: *He that receiveth a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, ſhall receive a Prophet's Reward.* The third, That of receiving a righteous Man: *He that receiveth a righteous Man in the Name of a righteous Man, ſhall receive a right-*

a righteous Man's Reward. The fourth, That of relieving the meaneſt of Chriſt's Diſciples: *Whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little Ones, a Cup of cold Water only, in the Name of a Diſciple, verily, I ſay unto you, he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his Reward.*

Charity is diſtinguiſhed into theſe different Kinds and Degrees, by the Dignity of the Perſons who are the Objects of it. For ſince receiving a Prophet, ſhall entitle us to a Prophet's Reward; and receiving a righteous Man, to a righteous Man's Reward; it is plain that receiving a Prophet as far exceeds the Charity of receiving a righteous Man, as a Prophet is more excellent than he.

To receive a Prophet, becauſe he is our Friend or Relation, is but a common Degree of Kindneſs; the Honour muſt be paid him becauſe he is a Prophet; it muſt be done in the Name of a Prophet: ſo that the Motive and Principle upon which we act, muſt be taken into the Account; and our good Deeds will receive their true and proper Value, from the Views and Regards with which they are done.

In this lies the Difference between the

Chriſtian and the Moral Virtue: the ſame Object appears not in the ſame Light to both. Nature melts at the Sight of Miſery, and by a ſecret Sympathy feels what it ſees; and relieves itſelf by adminiſtering Comfort and Support to the Afflicted: but Grace looks on the Sufferings of Chriſt in all his Members; and gives that Aſſiſtance to the Miſerable for his Sake, which Nature gives only for its own. For this Reaſon we find Chriſt charging himſelf with all the Kindneſſes and Acts of Mercy ſhewn to his Brethren and Diſciples. I *was an hungered*, ſays he, *and ye gave* ME *Meat*; I *was thirſty, and ye gave* ME *Drink*; I *was a Stranger, and ye took* ME *in, naked, and ye clothed* ME; I *was ſick, and ye viſited* ME; I *was in Priſon, and ye came unto* ME. This Regard to Chriſt, is the very Life and Soul of Chriſtian Charity; and that only which can entitle our good Works to Reward at the laſt Day: for our good Works themſelves have neither Merit nor Righteouſneſs, but as they begin and end in Chriſt: the love of Chriſt is the Fountain of Chriſtian Charity; and Chriſt in his Members is the Object of it.

This being the Nature of Chriſtian Charity,

rity, it is plain that one Kind will differ from another in Perfection, as it more nearly approaches the Perſon of Chriſt, who is the Object, and as it more ſtrongly partakes of the Principle, which is the Love of Chriſt. And by this Rule of Proportion, our Saviour has placed the ſeveral Degrees of Charity mentioned in the Text; as will appear by conſidering the Characters and Relations of the Perſons, who are the immediate Objects.

The Perſons mentioned are four Sorts: Apoſtles; Prophets; the Righteous; and, the little Ones. They are ranked according to the Dignity of their Characters, which ariſes from the Relation they bear to Chriſt, who is Head over all. And under one or other of theſe Denominations, may every Chriſtian be found: ſo that we have here, in Truth, a perfect Scheme of Chriſtian Charity, and a Rule to direct us in the Choice of proper Objects.

The Apoſtles, upon the Death of our Saviour, ſucceeded to the Government and Direction of the Church; they were commiſſioned to feed and to rule the Flock in his Stead, and in his Name. Under them were placed Teachers and Paſtors of differ-

ent Orders, who are comprehended under the general Name of Prophets.

Theſe Offices have been perpetuated in the Church by a conſtant Succeſſion of Men duly called to them; and the preſent Governors and Paſtors of it ſtand in the ſame Degree of Nearneſs and Relation to Chriſt, that the Apoſtles and Prophets did, who went before them in the ſame Work of the Miniſtry; and we muſt *ſo account of them, as of the Miniſters of Chriſt, and Stewards of the Myſteries of God*, 1 Cor. iv. 1.

The two next Characters belong to the Flock of Chriſt; who are not diſtinguiſhed from each other by any Difference in Character or Office, but only by their different Attainments in Faith; the Righteous are the *ſtrong* in Faith: the little Ones are the *weak*. The Righteous are thoſe, who, as the Apoſtle to the *Epheſians* expreſſes it, *are come unto a perfect Man, unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*. The little Ones are thoſe he calls *Children*; unſettled in the Faith, and liable *to be toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine*, Eph. iv. 13, 14.

The learned *Grotius* reckons here but three Degrees, (for he leaves out the Apoſtles,

ſtles, who yet are plainly mentioned in the 40th Verſe) and of them he ſays, that they are *tres Diſcipulorum Chriſti Gradus.* The Righteous he makes to be a middle Kind of Chriſtian, between the little Ones and the Perfect: and by Prophets he underſtands only perfect Chriſtians, without Regard to any peculiar Office or Character in the Church belonging to them. But this is neither agreeable to the Language of Scripture, nor to our Saviour's Deſign in this Place; the δίκαιοι, the *Righteous,* are always ſpoken of as perfect Chriſtians: thoſe who are to ſhine forth in the Kingdom like the Sun, are ſurely no mean or middle Kind of Chriſtians; but they are called the *Righteous.* So in the 25th of St. *Matthew,* thoſe who at the laſt Day ſhall be entitled to eternal Life, are the *Righteous.* In the 12th of the *Hebrews,* the Apoſtle tells them they are come—*to the General Aſſembly and Church of the Firſt Born, which are written in Heaven; and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect,* καὶ πνεύμασι δικαίων τετελειωμένων: Are the δίκαιοι, *Righteous,* here ſpoken of as middle Chriſtians,

where their diſtinguiſhing Character is, that they are *made perfect?*

Nor is the Word *Prophet* ever uſed, where Chriſtians in general are ſpoken of; but it always denotes a peculiar Character and Office: he gave, ſays St. *Paul* to the *Epheſians, ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers.* Where the Offices are thus diſtinctly enumerated, Prophet denotes a diſtinct Order in the Miniſtry; but when it is uſed generally, it denotes the Paſtors and Teachers of the Church, without Regard to their diſtinct Orders: and in the Text, Prophets follow after Apoſtles, in the ſame Manner that little Ones follow after the Righteous: for as little Ones include all Degrees of Chriſtians under the Righteous, ſo Prophets include all Degrees of Paſtors under Apoſtles.

Beſides, our Saviour's Deſign in this Place was evidently to lay a Foundation for the Support of the Chriſtian Miniſtry; he forbids them to provide for themſelves, for this Reaſon, becauſe they were Workmen worthy of their Hire, and ought to be provided for by others: and to encourage Men cheerfully to diſcharge this Duty to them,

them, he adds, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me.* And when this was his Deſign and Intention, could he forget all Degrees of Teachers, but Apoſtles, and yet be ſo particular in reckoning up all Degrees of Chriſtians? It was neceſſary to his Purpoſe indeed; and to complete the Compariſon; to mention the ſeveral Degrees of Chriſtian Charity, that it might appear how highly he valued, above all others, that which was to be the Support of his Miniſtry on Earth: and therefore having ſhewn the Preference that was to be given to his Miniſters, according to the Dignity of their Office, he proceeds to ſhew, that others were but in a lower Degree, and were to be regarded according to their perſonal Attainments in Faith and Holineſs; which was evidently giving the Preference to his Miniſters upon Account of their Office, before all others, how great ſoever their ſpiritual Attainments might be. This was effectually to recommend them to the Care of the Faithful, by ſhewing, that by providing for them here, they laid up for themſelves hereafter the greateſt Riches: for *he that receiveth a Prophet, in the Name of a Prophet, ſhall receive a Prophet's Reward.*

From

From this Declaration, made by our Saviour, we learn what ought to give the Preference in Chriſtian Charity. The Relation which Men bear to Chriſt, is the Foundation of the Love and Honour that are due to them; and the nearer the Relation is, the greater Love and Honour are due to it. Of his Diſciples our Saviour ſaid in the Goſpel, *Behold my Mother and my Brethren:* no Wonder then that he ſays to them here, *he that receiveth you, receiveth me.* By this Rule our Kindneſs muſt deſcend from the greateſt to the meaneſt of Chriſt's Diſciples; and when it reſts there, *it ſhall in no wiſe loſe its Reward.*

It were eaſy here to ſhew, the Title that theſe ſeveral Degrees of Charity have to their reſpective Rewards; but I ſhould tire your Patience, ſhould I run through every Kind; give me Leave only to inſtance in one, and becauſe it is moſt applicable to our preſent Diſcourſe, in that of *receiving a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet.*

This Charity is entitled to a Prophet's Reward: and well it may; for it is a Charity that does a Prophet's Duty: by enabling him to do the Work of his Calling, we ſhare with him in it; and preach the Goſ-

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pel by the Mouth which we feed. It is St. *Auſtin*'s Obſervation concerning St. *Paul*, that when he held the Garments of thoſe who ſtoned the Martyr *Stephen*, he did * *omnium Manibus lapidare*; the Aſſiſtance he gave to all, entitled him to the Guilt of all; and made his Hand to be in every Blow that was ſtruck: and certain it is, that the Aſſiſtance and Encouragement we give Men, either in the Good, or Evil, they do, will make us Sharers with them in their Merit, or their Guilt. The Charge which St. *Paul* gives *Timothy*, to lay Hands ſuddenly on no Man, he ſupports with this Reaſon, *Neither be Partaker of other Men's Sins; keep thyſelf pure.* For *he* would have been chargeable with the Unworthineſs of ſuch, as he ſhould, without due Trial, admit into the Miniſtry.

——* Quando lapidatus eſt *Stephanus* primus Martyr pro Nomine Chriſti, evidentius aderat et *Saulus*; et ſic aderat lapidantibus, ut non ei ſufficeret ſi tantum ſuis Manibus lapidaret. Ut enim eſſet in omnium lapidantium Manibus, ipſe omnium Veſtimenta ſervabat; magis ſæviens omnes adjuvando, quam ſuis Manibus lapidando. *Auguſt. de S. Pauli Converſione.*

Inter Lapidatores Sancti *Stephani* Martyris ibi erat iſte durus, et forte cæteris durior, omnium lapidantium Veſtimenta ſervabat, ut omnium in Manibus lapidaret. *Item in Pſ.* 147.

By

By the ſame Rule, to bring Men worthy of the Office, into the Miniſtry; to ſupport and encourage them in the Diſcharge of their Duty; is to partake with them in their Miniſtry, and muſt be attended with the Reward that is proper and peculiar to it.

The Work of the Miniſtry is great, and requires our whole Attendance; it is the Prophet's Buſineſs to inſtruct the Weak; to comfort the Afflicted; to viſit the Sick; to rebuke Sinners; and what time can be ſtolen from theſe neceſſary Duties, is but too little to be employed in ſearching the Oracles of Truth, that we may know the perfect Will of God in all Things: and if to this, the Trouble of the World muſt be added; and the conſtant Care of ſupporting Ourſelves and Families againſt encroaching Poverty and Want; who is ſufficient for theſe Things? Muſt not the Ignorant want Inſtruction, and the Afflicted Comfort, whilſt the Prophet is employed in the meaner Cares of the World? And may not ſuch then, who, by their Bounty and Liberality, ſet the Prophets of the Lord free from the World, and in a Manner conſecrate them anew, and entirely to his Service, be properly ſaid to labour with them in the

Work

Work of the Goſpel? and as they partake in the Work, ought they not likewiſe to partake in the Reward?

The propereſt Method of exerciſing this Charity, is by allotting ſuch a Maintenance for the Miniſters of Chriſt, as may enable them to provide for themſelves, and thoſe who depend on them: and of this Kind of Charity, the Piety of our gracious Sovereign has given a noble Inſtance; which will make her Memory dear to all Ages in the Church of God; and will, we doubt not, be an Addition to the Crown of Glory reſerved for her in the Heavens.

Next to its preſent Wants and Neceſſities, Poverty has nothing more terrible in it, than the Fear of Futurity; nor is Life acquainted with a more anxious and diſtracting Care, than that which ariſes from the Proſpect of entailing Poverty upon thoſe who are to come after us; and whom, by the ſtricteſt Bonds of Nature, we are obliged to provide for. After a preſent Maintenance therefore, the next Degree of Charity is to lighten this heavy Burden; that the Miniſters of Chriſt may with Cheerfulneſs, and without Interruption, attend the Service of the Altar; when they ſee a Way open for the Support of their indigent

indigent Families, when they themſelves, their only preſent Support, ſhall be taken from them. And this carries me to the ſecond Thing I propoſed, to obſerve to you,

II. How truly Chriſtian, and excellent in its Kind, that Charity is, which is the End and Deſign of this annual Solemnity.

The Objects of this Charity, are the Widows and Orphans of thoſe who ſpent their Lives in the Service of the Altar, and were found faithful in the Sight of God. Conſidered in themſelves, they are not, I truſt, the meaneſt of Chriſt's Diſciples: the Example of their Huſbands and Fathers; the pious Inſtruction under which they have lived; the regular Devotions to which they have been always accuſtomed; and their conſtant Communion with the Church; are ſure Pledges to us, of their Faith and Holineſs. But to their own, they add the Prophet's Claim to your Charity, who has left them nothing elſe to maintain them. The Age and Infirmities of the one, the Youth and Inexperience of the other; and the near Relation they bear to Chriſt, by his Servant now at Reſt with him; contain all the Motives and Arguments that can be uſed to excite the Charity of a Chriſtian.

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Were this Poverty the Effect of Luxury or Idleneſs, we might well be aſhamed to plead its Cauſe in public: but the Reaſons of it are too well known; and it is ſo far from being our Reproach, that in ſome Meaſure it is our Glory: for notwithſtanding the meaneſt of our parochial Cures, and the Diſcouragements of Want and Poverty, yet the Service of God has not been neglected, nor his Altar forſaken: and the numerous Objects of Charity, that are to be found among the Deſcendants of the *Engliſh* Clergy, are an Evidence on their Behalf, that they *fed the Flock of God which was among them, taking the Overſight thereof, not by conſtraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre Sake, but of a ready Mind.* And let no Man grudge us this our Boaſting; that we can in this Church ſhew more Labourers worthy of their Hire, who, without Gold or Silver in their Purſes, or Scrip for their Journey, preach the Goſpel of Chriſt, than any other Church in the Chriſtian World can do.

Some who ſubſiſt upon the Charity of this Corporation, are living Teſtimonies of the Faith and Conſtancy of the *Engliſh* Clergy, to God, and to their King. I ſhall eaſily be underſtood to mean the Widows of the

the ſequeſtered Clergy; who ſtill labour under that Poverty, which their Huſbands willingly choſe to ſubmit to, rather than to ſacrifice their Faith and their Allegiance to the Wickedneſs of the Age they lived in. And is this a diſgraceful Poverty to the Miniſters of the Goſpel, which ſo evidently *bears the Marks of the Lord Jeſus?*

Never does Chriſt more truly ſuffer in his Members, than when his Members ſuffer for him: nor can our Acts of Mercy ever more nearly approach him, than when we relieve thoſe who endure Afflictions for his and the Goſpel's Sake. Here then, my Brethren, *is Chriſt Jeſus evidently ſet forth before your Eyes,* ſuffering *among you*; ſuffering in theſe Members, who inherit the Poverty of his Prophets; which *they*, for his, and the Goſpel's Sake, embraced.

Had the Parents of theſe Children been turned to the more advantageous Employments of the World; had they, with the Subſtance which was ſpent in their Education, and in fitting them for the Miniſtry, bought any Knowledge but the Knowledge of the Goſpel; it would have made an anſwerable Return to them and their Families; for every Workman receives his Hire, and

and a due Recompence for his Labour, except the poor Miniſters of Chriſt, who have this only for their Comfort, that *they* are worthy of it.

It is this Poverty of the Prophet, which was the undeſerved Lot of his holy Office, that now claims our Charity: and have not the Children a Right to aſk in the Prophet's Name, ſince it is the Prophet's Poverty that afflicts them? Is it not juſt that they ſhould plead their Father's Relation to Chriſt, for a Support under their preſent Wants; ſince their Father's Relation to Chriſt has entailed theſe Wants upon them?

If therefore there be any Arguments for Pity, in Age and Infirmities, oppreſſed with Poverty; or if Youth and Innocence, expoſed to Want, have any Charms to move Compaſſion; if the Poverty of the Goſpel has any Right to a Chriſtian's Charity; or if the Chriſtian Prieſthood has for its Work's Sake, and its near Relation to Chriſt, any Title to Love or Honour; Behold! how all theſe Motives unite to plead the Cauſe that is now before you.

If the leaſt Charity, beſtowed on one of Chriſt's little Ones, ſhall draw down the Bleſſings of Heaven upon us; if to receive

a Righteous Man, ſhall entitle us to a Righteous Man's Reward; and if by ſhewing Mercy to a Prophet, we ſhall receive a Prophet's Reward; what Rewards may we not expect to reap from this Charity; where the little Ones and the Righteous are united into one Object, by ſuffering under the ſame common Calamity; and where both have the Prophet's Name, and the Prophet's Poverty to plead?

To theſe Motives what further can we add, but only our Prayers; that God would regard this poor Family of his Prophets, and raiſe them up Friends for their Comfort; that he would open the Hearts of the People towards them, for his Servants the Prophets Sake.

And may the Charity beſtowed on theſe poor Orphans, be ever had in Remembrance before the Lord. May he whom their Fathers ſerved in the Goſpel, and with whom they now reſt from their Labours, be ever mindful of the Kindneſs ſhewn to his Houſehold of Faith.

DISCOURSE III.

LUKE ix. 54, 55.

And when his Diſciples James and John ſaw this, they ſaid, Lord, wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven, and conſume them, even as Elias did? But he turned and rebuked them, and ſaid, Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of.

WHAT Provocation the Diſciples had to call Fire from Heaven to conſume the *Samaritans*, may be learnt from the 51ſt and following Verſes: *And it came to paſs, when the Time was come that he ſhould be received up, he ſtedfaſtly ſet his Face to go to Jeruſalem; and ſent Meſſengers before his Face: And they went and entered into a Village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, becauſe his*

Face was as though he would go to Jeruſalem. And when his Diſciples James and John ſaw this, they ſaid, Lord, wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven, and conſume them, even as Elias did? And he turned and rebuked them, and ſaid, Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to deſtroy Men's Lives, but to ſave them.— The Hatred between the *Jews* and *Samaritans* was founded in a religious Controverſy; and had proceeded ſo far, that all Offices of common Humanity had ceaſed between them; inſomuch that when our Saviour aſked a Women of that Country but for a little Water to drink, ſhe marvelled at it, and ſaid, *How is it, that thou being a Jew aſkeſt Drink of me, which am a Woman of Samaria?* John iv. 9. The Reaſon of her Wonder is added in the next Words; *For the Jews have no Dealings with the Samaritans.* From the 20th Verſe of the ſame Chapter we may gather what the Foundation of this Quarrel was: *Our Fathers,* ſays the Woman, *worſhipped in this Mountain; and ye ſay, that in Jeruſalem is the Place where Men ought to worſhip.* This Account is likewiſe confirmed by *Joſephus,* who tells

us,

us, that there were perpetual Quarrels and Animoſities between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, occaſioned by a Conteſt concerning the Holineſs of their Temples: the One affirming the Temple at *Jeruſalem* to be holy; and that all *Jews* ought to ſend their Offerings thither: the others affirming the ſame concerning the Temple in Mount *Gerizim*.

It was about the Time of the Paſſover, that our Saviour took this Journey to *Jeruſalem*, as we may collect from what is ſaid in the 51ſt Verſe; *And it came to paſs when* the Time was come that he ſhould be received up, *he ſtedfaſtly ſet his Face to go to Jeruſalem*. The Time that our Saviour was received up, we know, was at the *Jewiſh* Paſſover; and this Time being come, when this Journey was made, ſhews it to be about the Time of the Celebration of this Feaſt. And this may account, together with what has been already ſaid, for the unkind Reception which the Diſciples met with in *Samaria*. The *Samaritans* finding them upon a Journey to *Jeruſalem* about the Time of the Paſſover, concluded that they were going to celebrate the Feaſt there, and conſequently were ſuch as eſteemed the Temple of *Jeruſalem* to be the true Place of Wor-

ſhip, and were Deſpiſers of the Temple in the Mount of *Samaria*. For this Reaſon they refuſed to afford them any Entertainment in their Village; but ſent them out to proſecute their Journey, without the neceſſary Refreſhments for it. This raiſed the Indignation of the Diſciples: they immediately call to Mind the Story of *Elias*; it was in *Samaria* that *Elias* had deſtroyed the Captains and their Fifties with Fire from Heaven; the Place itſelf prompted them to imitate the noble Vengeance, that had once before been executed there; they knew that a greater than *Elias* was there now, and had been more barbarouſly treated: why not then the like exemplary Puniſhment? Why ſhould not the Fire of Heaven come down to conſume the Enemies of God's own Son, as once it did to deſtroy the Enemies of his Prophet? Warm with theſe Thoughts, and full of Reſentment for their Maſter's Honour, they apply to him, *Lord, wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven and conſume them, even as Elias did?* But he felt other Reſentments than theirs; and turned about, and calmly rebuked them, ſaying, *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of.*

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I have been the larger in ſetting forth the Circumſtances of this Story, becauſe in ſo many Inſtances they are applicable to our own Caſe. It was Hatred that grew out of a religious Controverſy, that bred the Treaſon of this Day: it was Fire, though not from Heaven, that was called for to decide the Diſpute: it was Zeal for Chriſt, *but not according to Knowledge*, that prompted to the Revenge: the Revenge was bloody and unchriſtian; and to every One concerned in it does the Voice of Chriſt reach, *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of.*

It would be endleſs on this Occaſion to run into the Controverſies that are between us and the Church of *Rome:* the Caſe we have this Day to plead with them, wants not the Support which the Righteouſneſs of our Cauſe might afford it. Let them be the Diſciples: let us be the *Samaritans*; miſtaken, nay, obſtinately miſtaken in our Religion: let them have all the Advantage that the Parallel in the Text can afford them: let them call us Hereticks, Schiſmatics, Aliens from the Body and Church of Chriſt: yet, after all, their furious Rage, and their cruel Thirſt after Blood entitle them to the Reproof of their Lord, *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of.*

Not all the boaſted Advantages of their Church can juſtify them in the Cruelty they uſe towards their Fellow-Creatures. Have they a Zeal and Love for Chriſt? So had the Diſciples. Are they provoked by the Indignities offered to him? So were they. Have they Faith enough among them to work Miracles in his Name; and will they from thence juſtify their Practice? The ſame Faith had the Diſciples; *Wilt thou*, ſay they, *that* We *command Fire to come down from Heaven?* You ſee their Faith: they wanted nothing but the Lord's Permiſſion to do the thing: and yet, their Faith notwithſtanding, we learn from the unerring Voice of Truth, that their Spirit was not right within them.

But when we have conſidered our Saviour's Judgment in this Caſe, and how far it extends, we ſhall be better able to judge, to what Kind of Spirit the dark Contrivance of this Day is to be aſcribed.

The Caſe has been already ſtated, and I need not repeat it: my Buſineſs at preſent ſhall be to conſider, how far this Reaſon of our Saviour's excludes all Uſe of temporal Puniſhments in Matters of Religion. And,

I. I ſhall briefly ſhew that it holds in all Caſes with reſpect to Church-power.

II. That

II. That the Argument does not affect the Civil Magiſtrate's Power; nor tye up his Hands from interpoſing with the civil Sword in Matters proper for his Juriſdiction; however they may be pretended to be allied to Religion.

III. I ſhall apply what is ſaid to the preſent Occaſion.

I. As to the Perſons on whom the Diſciples would have executed Vengeance, they were on two Accounts the Objects of their Wrath. They were Apoſtates from the true Religion, and had erected a Temple to themſelves on the Mount of *Samaria*. Beſides this, they had very inhumanly treated them and their Maſter. The Rule of Charity is ſo very plain in Scripture, and the Duty of forgiving Injuries ſo expreſs, that I think perſonal Affronts and Injuries can with no Colour be pleaded to juſtify Perſecution. And therefore the whole Weight of the Argument lies upon the Honour of God and Religion; from which Topics the Doctrine of extirpating Heretics fetches its main Support. But to this Argument our Saviour has furniſhed us with a ſhort but full Reply, Ver. 56. *The Son of Man is not come to deſtroy Men's Lives, but to ſave them.*

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The Honour of God is beſt conſulted, by complying with the gracious Deſigns of his Providence; and the Honour of Religion beſt ſecured, by promoting the Ends of it: and ſince our Saviour has told us, that the Deſign of his coming into the World, and the End of the Religion he taught, was not to deſtroy, but to ſave Men's Lives; there can be no greater Indignity offered to God, no greater Contempt ſhewn of Chriſt, or Blemiſh caſt upon Religion; than to make Religion, which was deſigned to ſave Men, the Means and Inſtrument of deſtroying them. The Argument reaches to all Methods of propagating Religion which are hurtful or injurious to Men, as well as merely deſtroying them by the Fire or Sword; for the *Son of Man* no more came to injure or abuſe Men, than he did to deſtroy them: and therefore the Argument is equally ſtrong againſt injuring or abuſing our Fellow-Creatures in order to propagate the Faith, as it is againſt deſtroying them. And very ſtrong it muſt be in both Caſes, ſince it is our Saviour's own Argument.

It is true, that all Puniſhments do not come under the Notion of Injuries or Abuſes; ſince many are calculated for the Benefit

Benefit of Offenders; to reclaim them to a better Mind, and better Manners: and conſequently, all Puniſhments will not come within this Argument of our Bleſſed Saviour: and therefore, notwithſtanding what has been ſaid, it may ſtill be pretended, that there is Room for the Exerciſe of temporal Puniſhments (for of ſuch only I ſpeak at preſent) in the Caſe of Religion; ſince ſome Puniſhments may be ſubſervient to the End of Religion, and may help to ſet forward the Salvation of Men.

But however good a Reaſon this may be for exerciſing temporal Puniſhments in the Cauſe of Religion, it can ſignify nothing in the preſent Caſe, unleſs the Church be veſted with a Power of diſpenſing temporal Puniſhments: for this Reaſon cannot create a Power, where it is not; it can only direct the Exerciſe of it, where it is. And therefore, to thoſe who urge the Conveniency of temporal Puniſhments in Matters of Religion, we anſwer with our Bleſſed Saviour, *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of:* the Kingdom of Chriſt is not of this World; nor is it to be erected or ſupported by worldly Power: he has not intrenched upon the civil Magiſtrate's Authority, or granted any

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Part of their Commiſſion to his Diſciples. When St. *Peter* drew the Sword in his Defence, he commanded him to put up the Sword again into its Place, with this Threatning, *For all they who take the Sword, ſhall periſh with the Sword.* And in his Anſwer to *Pilate* he declares, *My Kingdom is not of this World. If my Kingdom were of this World, then would my Servants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the Jews: But now is my Kingdom not from hence,* John xviii. 36.

This may ſerve to ſhew the Meaning and Extent of our Saviour's Argument; and how contrary it is to the Genius and Spirit of the Chriſtian Religion, to found its Faith in temporal Puniſhments. The Powers which are derived to the Church from Chriſt the Head of it, are purely ſpiritual: the Puniſhments ſhe inflicts, are of the ſame Nature; and the Effect of them generally ſuſpended till the Offender comes to another World. It is juſt Reaſoning, I think, to infer from the ſpiritual Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom, and the ſpiritual Power of his Miniſters on Earth, that temporal Puniſhments are not proper to enforce the Laws and Edicts of Chriſt's Kingdom; for ſince the

the Kingdom is not of this World, the Powers belonging to this Kingdom cannot be of this World. But how thoſe, who derive all Church Power and Authority from the Magiſtrate or the People, can upon their own Principles exclude temporal Puniſhments in Matters of Religion, I cannot well conceive: for if the Authority be of this World, the Magiſtrate bears the Sword, to command Obedience to his Laws and Edicts; and the Exerciſe of the Sword reaches as far as his Authority goes; and therefore if the Power of the Church is founded in his Authority, it muſt likewiſe be upheld by his Sword: and conſequently, thoſe who are for throwing all ſpiritual Power out of the Church, and introducing into the Room of it, a Power derived from the civil Magiſtrate, muſt, to exempt the Conſciences of Men from a ſpiritual Juriſdiction, ſubmit them to a temporal; and leave them to truckle to the Power of the Sword; which is in its Conſequence, whatever it may be in its Principle, downright Popery.

As the Power of the Magiſtrate is by ſome exalted in Matters of Religion, beyond all Proportion of Reaſon; ſo by others it is as much depreſſed.

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Let us therefore in the ſecond Place proceed to ſhew, that the Reaſon of the Text does not affect the civil Magiſtrate's Power, nor tie up his Hands from interpoſing with the civil Sword, in Matters proper for its Juriſdiction, however they may be pretended to be allied to Religion.

The Foundation or Principle upon which the Magiſtrate's Power has been both unreaſonably exalted and depreſſed, is Liberty of Conſcience. Though, to ſpeak properly, on the one Side a Liberty from Conſcience ſeems to be the Thing aimed at; for which Reaſon all Regard to ſpiritual Matters is ſtruck out, and the Magiſtrate's Will ſet up as the ſupreme Law of Conſcience; on the other Side a Liberty for Conſcience to act as it pleaſes, is the Thing contended for; and therefore the Magiſtrate's Power, in all Caſes where Conſcience is concerned, is taken away, and Men ſet at Liberty to act as their Conſcience, how erroneous ſoever, ſhall direct them, without Controul. But it ought to be remembered, that the Arguments drawn from the Nature of Religion, and of Chriſt's ſpiritual Kingdom, againſt the Uſe of temporal Puniſhments, are concluſive only as to the Miniſters of that Kingdom;

dom; and cannot extend to the civil Magiſtrate: they, as *they* are Miniſters of a Kingdom purely ſpiritual, can have no Claim as ſuch to any temporal Power; and therefore they can exerciſe none: they conſider Men's Actions with reſpect to the Conſequences of them in another World, and therefore they denounce the Puniſhments of another World againſt Offenders: *Knowing the Terrors of the Lord, we perſuade Men.* But the civil Magiſtrate has a temporal Power; and the Peace and Order of this World are his Care and Concern: it is his proper Buſineſs to conſider the Actions of Men with regard to public Peace and Order; without reſpecting from what internal Principle they flow. If the Actions of Men are ſuch as tend to diſturb the Peace, or to deſtroy the Frame of the Government over which he preſides; whether they proceed from Conſcience or not, he is not bound to conſider; nor indeed can he; but it is his Duty to puniſh and to reſtrain them. Whenever Men's Religion or Conſcience come to ſhew themſelves in Practice, they fall under the Cognizance of the civil Power: or whenever they branch out into Principles deſtructive of the civil Government, they

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are then ripe for the civil Sword, and may juſtly be rooted out. Upon theſe Principles, I preſume there have been many penal Laws enacted againſt Popery in this Kingdom: not upon the weak Suppoſition that no Man's Conſcience ever led him to be a Papiſt; but upon this known and experienced Truth, that whenever a Man's Conſcience leads him to be a Papiſt, it leads him to be an Enemy to the Conſtitution of this Government; and therefore the Government has a Right to ſecure itſelf againſt the Practices of a profeſſed Enemy, by the Terror of temporal Puniſhments, notwithſtanding the Pleas of Conſcience and Religion. And ſhould any Sect hereafter ariſe, entering into Practices, or profeſſing Principles deſtructive of the legal Conſtitution, the Magiſtrate would have as good a Right to unſheath the Sword againſt them, as at preſent he has to do it againſt the Papiſts: nor ſhall it avail them, any more than theſe, to ſay, they act upon Principles of Religion or Conſcience.

As to mere Difference in Opinion, which ends only in Speculation, or influences only the internal Acts of the Mind, or produces only *ſuch external* Acts as no Way concern the public Peace, I ſee not how the Magiſtrate

trate can intereſt himſelf in them: but wherever Difference of Opinion is attended with Conſequences that may affect the State, how can it ſtand with Reaſon, or public Good, to exclude the Magiſtrate's Power in ſuch Caſes?

Men often diſpute againſt penal Laws, under the Notion of their being Laws of the Church; which of Right they never can be; for the Church has no Right or Authority to impoſe penal Laws: they are, ſtrictly and properly ſpeaking, Laws of the State; they have for their End, as all other civil Laws have, the Good of the State, and are enacted to prevent the Growth either of Principles or Practices which are conceived to be dangerous: and I would fain know how the Subject's Conſcience can bind the Magiſtrate's Power from acting in its proper Sphere, which is to prevent all growing Dangers to the State. There have been thoſe in this Kingdom, and there may be again, who found themſelves perſuaded in Conſcience, that the Goods of Chriſtians were common: ſhould ſuch a one come to ſhare with you, as he would call it, in your Goods, or as the Law would term it, to rob you of them, would his Conſcience and his

miſunderſtanding a few Texts of Scripture relating to that Matter, be a good and juſtifiable Plea in a Court of Juſtice? If it would, I dare engage, the Sect will ſoon be numerous: if it would not, it can be no general Rule, that Conſcience ought to be exempt from penal Laws.

The Truth of the Matter lies in a very narrow Compaſs: the Church has no Right to impoſe penal Laws upon any Account: in Matters purely of a religious Nature, the State has no Right neither: but of ſuch Matters perhaps there may be great Scarcity in the World; for the Paſſions of Men work themſelves into their religious Concerns; and the Controverſy grows inſenſibly into a Struggle for Power and Superiority; and often breeds Convulſions that ſhake the very Conſtitution of the civil Government. And muſt the Magiſtrate ſit ſtill becauſe the Buſtle is about Religion, and be told that he has nothing to do in it? Surely it becomes him to ſtir and to drive Conſcience out of the State to its proper Seat, the Heart of Man; whither his Power neither can, nor ought to purſue it.

In this Queſtion of the Magiſtrate's Right, it matters not what a Man's Opini-

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ons are, or how well or how ill a Man's Conſcience is informed: for thus much is certain, that the Magiſtrate has no Right to puniſh Men for the Miſtakes in their Judgment, or the Errors of their Conſciences. On the other Side, when the Magiſtrate calls a Man to an Account for his Actions, I cannot ſee that it is ſo much as his Duty to enquire, whether the Man took what he did to be a Part of his Religion, or whether he followed the Dictates of his Conſcience or no. What can the civil Magiſtrate have to do in ſuch Queſtions; or how can he arrive at any Evidence concerning the Truth of theſe Matters? The Nature of the Action lies properly before him, conſidered in itſelf, and then in its Conſequences; and if it tend to Miſchief, to breed Diſturbance in the State, he has a Right to puniſh it, without conſidering whether it be a religious Action or no.

There would need no diſputing in this Caſe, if Men would attend to the juſt Conſequences of their own Principles. They lay it down for a Maxim, that the Magiſtrate has *nothing* to do with Conſcience; which is very true: but then they infer, that the Magiſtrate cannot puniſh Men for acting according to their Conſcience; which

is to ſay, that his Authority is ſuſpended by the Plea of Conſcience: and if ſo, the Magiſtrate, I think, will have more than enough to do with it; ſince the People's Conſcience will bind his Power in the Exerciſe of the Sword, and he muſt of Neceſſity in the Adminiſtration of Juſtice enter into the Examination of Conſcience; for ſince that is to be his Rule, he ought to know and to conſider it.

But if you would attend to the natural and juſt Conſequences of the Principle, the Truth will ſtand in a clear Light. The Magiſtrate has nothing to do with Conſcience: and therefore on one Hand *he* has no Right to bring Conſcience to his Bar, to puniſh the Errors or Miſtakes of it; or to cenſure even the Actions which proceed from it, unleſs they affect that which is his immediate Care, the public Good, or the private Peace and Property of his Subjects: on the other Hand, no one elſe can bring Conſcience before him, or by the Pleas of it ſuperſede his Authority in any Caſe proper for his Cognizance. For the Magiſtrate might well ſay, The Action is ſuch as I am concerned to enquire into, Conſcience I have nothing to do with, it does not lie before me,

me, and therefore I ſhall not attend to its Pretences. Nor indeed is it poſſible that he ſhould, ſince it is in every Man's Power in all Caſes to plead Conſcience; which is never more eaſily pretended to, than by thoſe who have none. A Man under a criminal Accuſation might as well refer himſelf to what was done in the *Mogul*'s Country, as to what paſſed at that Time in his own unſearchable Heart; and the Magiſtrate might with much more Reaſon admit the Evidence in one Caſe, than in the other, where there is no Poſſibility of knowing the Truth.

It may be thought perhaps by ſome, that I have been pleading all this while for the Magiſtrate's Right to perſecute the Subject upon Account of Religion; and ſo I have, if there be any Religion which indiſpenſably obliges Men to diſturb the public Peace, to pervert the Ways of Juſtice, to be injurious to their Brethren, either in their Life, or Property, or good Name; for theſe Things certainly the Magiſtrate ought to puniſh and correct. But if this be what all Religions univerſally diſclaim, and abhor, there is no Danger that any Man ſhould ſuffer merely for his Religion, becauſe the Magiſtrate has a Right to puniſh Sedition and Rebellion,

and to do juſtice in Caſes of private Injury and Oppreſſion. One may be miſtaken in his Notions of Religion, and yet in his political Capacity, as touching the Laws of his Country, he may be blameleſs; and as long as he continues ſo, his Miſtakes are out of the Reach of the Magiſtrate's Power.

The Reaſon of the Caſe extends as well to Doctrines as to Practices: the Magiſtrate has a Right to ſuppreſs all ſuch as are pernicious to the State. In Queen *Elizabeth's* Time, there were ſome who maintained as a Point of Religion, the Unlawfulneſs of Women's Government: ſhould the Doctrine be revived at this Day, I imagine that the Plea of Religion would not atone for the Malignancy of the Opinion.

What has been ſaid may ſerve to mark out to us the juſt Limits of ſpiritual and civil Power. The Miniſters of Chriſt are not of this World, and therefore they have no Right to extend their Maſter's Kingdom, by the Exerciſe of worldly or temporal Power: the civil Magiſtrate is of this World, and the Affairs of it are his proper Care; from which he ought not to be excluded by any Pretences or Pleas of Religion: nor will this bring any Man under Difficulty upon the Account

Account of pure Religion, which never interferes with the Magiſtrate's Right; but where Men build upon religious Doctrines or Practices deſtructive of civil Government, they muſt anſwer to God for perverting Religion, and to the Magiſtrate for diſturbing the Public.

Laſtly, It remains only that we apply what has been ſaid to the Occaſion of this Day. There are but two Things which the Church of *Rome* can inſiſt on, both of which are determined againſt them by the Doctrine of the Text. For 1ſt, Whatever Differences in Religion there are between us, yet they are unjuſtifiable in the Methods they uſe for our Converſion. And 2dly, Notwithſtanding all their Pleas of Religion, the civil Power has a Right to puniſh their Practices, and did juſtly exerciſe that Right, in bringing the Contrivers and Actors of the bloody Tragedy of this Day to an open and a ſhameful Death. Theſe are but the neceſſary Conſequences of what has been already diſcourſed, and therefore I ſhall not trouble you with enlarging on them.

How juſtly then may we expoſtulate with the Church of *Rome* the Cruelty of this Day, in which they outdid even them-

ſelves. Depoſing a King, which they have often attempted, was not their Work; enſlaving the Nobility, which is their common Practice, was not their Aim; they had prepared a richer Sacrifice to the Triple Crown, and intended to expiate the Offence of the Nation againſt the Pope, by the nobleſt Blood which it ever produced.

Could they have buried our Laws and our Conſtitutions in one general Ruin, they had then Hopes of ſucceeding in their Attempt. Theſe *Children of the World are wiſe in their Generation*, and rightly judge, that to confound the Peace of the State, and the Purity of the Church, is their only Way to prevail againſt both; ſince nothing can make their Dominion tolerable, but Anarchy and Confuſion; nothing their Religion, but Atheiſm and Infidelity.

But God prevented their Malice, and turned their Miſchief upon their own Heads. In Memory of which Bleſſing this Day was deſervedly diſtinguiſhed in the *Engliſh* Calendar: which Piety of our Anceſtors has deſcended upon us their Poſterity in new Bleſſings; and this Day has been again conſecrated by the Deliverance of theſe Kingdoms out of the Hands of the ſame implacable Enemies.

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There is nothing an *Engliſhman* has more to fear than the prevailing Power of Popery; and ſo univerſally it is dreaded, that Popery muſt ever be a Millſtone to the Neck of any Cauſe to which it is but ſomuch as generally ſuſpected to be allied; and this, I preſume, has been well underſtood by thoſe who have always been labouring to infuſe the Fears and Jealouſies of it into the Minds of the People, and to clog the Work of the Government with the Suſpicions of it. If there be any Aſperſion, which Men ſhould make a Conſcience of caſting upon their Rulers, it is this, which contains whatever can be thought on to render a Man odious. To deſign the Advancement of Popery, is to deſign the Ruin of the State, and the Deſtruction of the Church; it is to ſacrifice the Nation to a double Slavery, to prepare Chains both for their Bodies and their Minds.

What Intereſt is to be ſerved by fomenting theſe Jealouſies, is, I think, hard to be underſtood: the Proteſtant Succeſſion is eſtabliſhed by the Law, and what further Security can be had, muſt riſe out of the Affections of the People; which will not be increaſed by perſuading them, that they ſtand

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ſuſpected in the Opinion of thoſe who may be one Day their Governors. Should theſe Jealouſies ſo far prevail, (as we truſt they cannot) as to render one great Part of the People of *England* ſuſpected to the Princes abroad, what Strength would the Proteſtant Succeſſion gain by theſe Means? Would not the Conſequence be, that this Part of the People would begin to imagine their Cauſe prejudged, and think with leſs Pleaſure upon the Security, which now they eſteem as their great Bleſſing? What may grow out of ſuch mutual Diſtruſts in Length of Time, ſhould they once prevail, I cannot tell, but no Good, I am ſure. They who heartily wiſh well to the Succeſſion, will endeavour that there may be a mutual Confidence and good Opinion, between the People and the Princes of the Blood, that whenever the Time comes, which muſt rob us of our deareſt Bleſſing, they may aſcend the Throne neither ſuſpecting nor ſuſpected; but may be received with as much Joy, as the Circumſtances of that ſad (and I hope far diſtant) Day will admit of. Let the People be told how fully they inherit the Virtues of their Royal Anceſtors, that no Diſtance of Time or Place can ever efface

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their Love for our common Country; but let none but theirs and their Country's Enemies inſinuate, that there is any Cauſe for mutual Fears and Jealouſies between them.

But whatever our Fears are, let them be ſo far ſuſpended at leaſt, that we may enjoy the Eaſe and Tranquillity which the preſent auſpicious Reign affords. Let not all our Zeal for our holy Religion be ſpent in quarrelling and diſputing about it; but ſome of it be ſhewn in our dutiful Behaviour to our Governors, in mutual Love and Charity. Let the Purity of our Religion be expreſſed in the Innocence of our Lives; that whenever God ſhall be pleaſed to deliver us from the Scourge of War, we may be in ſuch a Diſpoſition to receive the Bleſſing, *that Mercy and Truth may meet together, and Righteouſneſs and Peace kiſs each other.*

Above all, let us earneſtly contend with God in Prayer for Mercies upon our good Queen; that ſhe may be long continued to us; that he would give Peace in her Time; that no Demerit of ours may rob us of the invaluable Bleſſings we enjoy in her; that whenever ſhe, ripe for Glory and Immortality, ſhall be called to everlaſting Peace and a better Crown, that then he would with

with a more eſpecial Eye of Mercy and Tenderneſs regard theſe orphan Kingdoms, and hide them under the Shelter of his Wings, till the Danger be overpaſt.

DISCOURSE IV.

2 SAM. xxiii. 3, 4.

The God of Iſrael ſaid, The Rock of Iſrael ſpake to me; He that ruleth over Men muſt be juſt, ruling in the Fear of God: And he ſhall be as the Light of the Morning when the Sun riſeth, even a Morning without Clouds; as the tender Graſs ſpringing out of the Earth, by clear ſhining after Rain.

THE Words read to you, are ſaid to be the laſt of *David*, and uttered by *the Spirit of the Lord*, whoſe *Word* was *in his Tongue*. They are by ſome *Jewiſh* Interpreters referred to the Days of the *Meſſiah*, as foretelling the Righteouſneſs and Increaſe of his Kingdom for evermore: but in this Senſe, they can no otherwiſe relate to the *Meſſiah*,

Meſſiah, than as they are pointed at him through *David*, who was a Type of that Great Prince of Peace and of Righteouſneſs; and conſequently, in their natural and literal Senſe, they regard the temporal Government of *David*, and ſtand as a fit Inſtruction for the Princes of the Earth.

There is likewiſe ſome Doubt of the Time when theſe Words were firſt ſpoken: whether this Admonition and Promiſe were given *David* upon his firſt Entrance on his Kingdom, as a ſure Direction to guide him through the Difficulties of Empire; and by him delivered as his laſt Words, and the beſt Legacy which he could bequeath, to thoſe who were to ſucceed him in the Throne of *Iſrael:* or whether they were firſt conceived and uttered by *David* in the laſt Scene of his Life, and left with the Authority of a dying Father to his Sons, as containing the true Secret of governing happily; which he had learned, both from long Experience, and from the Influence of the Spirit of God. But in whichſoever of theſe Views we conſider the Text, it comes to the ſame Thing; and we have the true Art of governing, by which a Prince may render himſelf and his People happy, deſcribed

ſcribed to us by the Wiſdom of the Divine Spirit. *He that ruleth over Men muſt be juſt, ruling in the Fear of the Lord.*

It is an Happineſs that we may juſtly glory in, that theſe Words are a proper Theme for this Day, the Subject of which is the Acceſſion of our Prince to the Throne. Such a Deſcription of the Ruler's Duty produced on the like Occaſion, would in many Places be eſteemed a Reproach to the Prince; and could yield no Fruit to the People, but a Senſe of their Misfortune. Unhappy Countries! where even ſuch Scriptures have the Sound of Treaſon; but with us, the brighter Light they are placed in, the more Honour they reflect on the Throne, the greater Comfort and Conſolation on the People: for though the Merit of good Government be the Prince's proper Praiſe, yet the Benefit of it is univerſal, and reaches even the meaneſt of his Subjects.

The Proſperity of a Prince, who rules in the Fear of the Lord, is repreſented to us, in the latter Part of the Text, under very beautiful Similitudes: *He ſhall be as the Light of the Morning, when the Sun riſeth, even a Morning without Clouds.* The Sun is the great Spirit of the World, in the Light

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of which all Things are made to rejoice; perpetual Spring attends his Courſe; all Things revive at his Approach, and put on a new Face of Youth and Beauty: Winter and Froſt lag behind him; Nature grows deformed, and the World ſickens at his Departure. What the Sun is to the World, the ſame is a good Prince to his People: he is the Life and Soul of the Public; his Influence produces Beauty, Order, and Regularity, and ſo animates every Member, that the whole Society is Harmony and Peace. This Difference there is, the Sun in his meridian Glory, ſtrikes ſome Parts with too fierce a Fire, and the Field fades under the Heat which ſhould refreſh it: but the juſt Prince, like the riſing Sun in a clear Morning, ſhines with kinder Rays, and his Juſtice being always tempered with Love and Mercy, can never be deſtructive.

As this Similitude ſets before us the Bleſſings derived from a juſt Prince to his People, ſo does the next repreſent to us the Stability of Kingdoms ſo happily directed. That Government is always in its Youth and Vigour that is under the Management of a wiſe Ruler; its inward Conſtitution is healthful, and ſo confirmed in Strength, that

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it ſtands ſecure from outward Dangers: *He ſhall be as the tender Graſs ſpringing out of the Earth by clear ſhining after Rain.* There cannot be a more lively Image of a flouriſhing Condition, than what is conveyed to us in theſe Words. The Graſs which is forced by the Heat of the Sun, before the Ground is well prepared by Rains, is weak and languid, and of a faint Complexion: but when *clear ſhining* ſucceeds the gentle Showers of Spring, the Field puts forth its beſt Strength, and is more beautifully arrayed *than even Solomon in all his Glory.* Such is the Splendor, ſuch are the never-fading Glories of a Kingdom, whoſe Prince ruleth in the Fear of the Lord.

The Text thus explained leads us to conſider,

Firſt, The Character of a good Prince, expreſſed in theſe Words, *He that ruleth over Men muſt be juſt, ruling in the Fear of God.*

Secondly, How great a Bleſſing a juſt Prince is to his People; which is repreſented under the Similitudes of the riſing Sun, and the flouriſhing Graſs ſpringing out of the Earth.

Firſt, then, we are to conſider the Cha-

racter of a good Prince expreſſed in theſe Words; *He that ruleth over Men muſt be juſt, ruling in the Fear of God.*

Juſtice, in the limited Notion of the Word, as it ſignifies a due Execution of the Law, an equal Diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments, to the Obedient and Diſobedient, makes but a Part of the Deſcription of a good Governor; that which fills up the Character, is a more extenſive Virtue, influencing the whole Conduct of a Reign, and denotes rather the general Habit of Virtue, than any particular Acts that flow from it. What this Virtue is, may beſt be underſtood by comparing it with that, which is the true Meaſure of it, the Fear of the Lord. And thus the Text has taught us to explain the Notion, referring us evidently to the Fear of the Lord, as to the proper *Rule* and *Meaſure* of that Juſtice which it requires in a Ruler: *He that ruleth over Men muſt be juſt*; what is meant by juſt, the following Words inform us; *Ruling in the Fear of God.*

The Fear of God is in all Caſes the Beginning of Wiſdom, as being the true Foundation of Religion; the Principle from which the Knowledge of our Duty, as well

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as our Obligation to Obedience, is in all Inſtances deducible. It is a Principle which extends to all the Stations and Circumſtances of human Life; and will teach the Prince, as well how to govern, as the Subject how to obey.

Now the Fear of the Lord either means a juſt Senſe of the Attributes of God, or elſe neceſſarily ſuppoſes it; for Fear always follows, and what is determined by the Conception we form of the Thing, or Perſon feared. If we join to great Power great Malice, and a ſettled Reſolution to do Miſchief, the Object ſo clothed, ſtrikes with Terror and Confuſion, and the Reſult is an abject, ſlaviſh Fear: if we add to unlimited Power, as great Goodneſs and Benevolence, ſuch a Being creates in our Minds, Awe and Reverence, and repleniſhes our Hearts with filial Fear and Veneration. To know the Difference between the Fear of a Father and of a Tyrant, we muſt neceſſarily conſult our Ideas of both, by which only we can diſtinguiſh the Paſſions. To act therefore under the Fear of God, is one and the ſame Thing as to be influenced by a juſt Senſe of his Power, Holineſs, and other divine Perfections; and to *rule* in the Fear

of the Lord, is ſo to *govern*, as being always under the Senſe of his Power and Holineſs, as being ever in the Preſence of him, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

It is this Senſe, which will make Princes become true Fathers of their People: for when they conſider, that they ſtand in the Place of God, the common Father of Mankind; that thoſe, who are made ſubject to their Power, are the Sons of him, who put the Reins of Government into their Hands; they muſt needs treat their People like their Children, as conſcious to themſelves of executing a Father's Power; and knowing, that they ſhould be injurious to him above them, as well as to thoſe below them, ſhould they uſe his Authority in a Way not ſuitable to his Character. Could a Prince abuſe his Authority, to the gratifying his Luſt or Paſſion, had he this Senſe before his Eyes? Could he think it reaſonable to make the Power of God execute the corrupt Deſigns of a Man's Heart? In the private Affairs of Life, there is nothing leaves a fouler Stain upon a good Character, than the Abuſe of a Truſt, which extends perhaps only to the Guardianſhip of a few Infants and a ſmall Eſtate; and yet a Man that

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proves unjuſt to his Friend in ſo ſmall a Concern, in neglecting the Intereſt of the little Family committed to his Care, is looked upon by all, as abandoned to the Senſe of Honour and Virtue. The Reaſon of this Reſentment is plain; becauſe every Body ſees that the Father left his Friend, his Power and Authority over the Family and Eſtate, that he might become a Father to them in his Stead: and this is underſtood to carry with it ſuch an Obligation, that an honeſt Man is more careful and induſtrious in the Concerns of others, than oft-times he is in his own. A good Prince governs with the ſame Sentiments, which are ever ſuggeſted to him by the Fear of God: he conſiders his People, as the Family of the Almighty, over which he is placed by the Appointment of Providence; as Orphans committed to his Care, whoſe Proſperity and Happineſs depend entirely on his Conduct: the Will of God is always the Rule by which he uſes the Power of God; and in every Inſtance of Government, he does the very Thing which he judges God would do, were he perſonally to determine the Caſe himſelf: for a Prince ſo inſtructed, ſeeks not *his own Will, but the Will of him who ſent him.*

This is a general Account of the Prince's Temper and Diſpoſition, who rules in the Fear of the Lord. If we carry the View through the Particulars of Government, we ſhall diſcover more diſtinctly the happy Influence of this religious Principle.

The royal Authority being the immediate Power of God, has no more immediate Concern, than to promote the Service, and to eſtabliſh the Honour of God in the Hearts of Men; it is but a natural Tribute for Princes to pay their Maker, to provide that thoſe whom God has made to be their Subjects, ſhould not ceaſe to be his Servants. Beſides, this is a Caſe recommended to them both by their own, and their People's Intereſt: it is not in the Power of the beſt Princes, to make all their Subjects equally happy; Poverty and Diſtreſs will be the uncomfortable Companions of ſome, in the moſt flouriſhing Kingdoms: but Religion is a Way open to Happineſs, to which the Rich and the Poor have equally Admittance; it is that only which can make all Circumſtances of Life eaſy, and is neceſſary, as well to teach us *how to abound*, as how to *ſuffer need*: for this Reaſon then, a Prince concerned for the Happineſs of his People, cannot

cannot be unconcerned for the Intereſt of Religion. But further: The Welfare and Proſperity of civil Societies, as ſuch, depend upon the Influence which Religion has upon the Minds and Manners of the People; human Laws are often tranſgreſſed with Impunity; often eaſily evaded; and ſometimes, for want of due Execution, they loſe their Force and Vigour: but the Law never dies in an Heart ſeaſoned with Religion, and conſcious to itſelf, that it owes Obedience to the Ruler, not only *for Wrath, but for Conſcience Sake.* Faction ſometimes grows too ſtrong for lawful Power; and who then ſhall refrain the Madneſs of the People, who already think themſelves ſuperior to their Prince, and know none higher than he to be afraid of? Religion only can ſubdue the wild Paſſions of Men, and make the Ruler ſecure againſt their Attempts; ſo that in this Senſe it may be truly ſaid, that the Throne ſhall endure for ever, which is eſtabliſhed in Righteouſneſs.

Theſe Advantages can never be wanting under the Conduct of a Prince, who governs in the Fear of the Lord: the Senſe of his own Duty, and his Regard for the Honour of God, will incline him in all

Caſes to promote and encourage the Service of his Maker; and to fill up that Character, which, when juſtly ſuſtained, is both the Ornament and Strength of the Crown, *Defender of the Faith.* To ſuch Princes the Church of God owes her temporal Proſperity, her liberal Maintenance, and, in great Meaſure, even the Purity of her Religion: to ſuch ſhe owes the Temples of God, which are in every Nation the trueſt Indications of royal Piety and Magnificence: To ſuch Princes——But whither am I going? Methinks, my Country chides me, whilſt I deal to ſuch Princes in common thoſe Praiſes, which ſeem to be the diſtinguiſhing Marks, the Excellencies peculiar to our own. Happy *Britain!* that canſt ſo eaſily diſcover the Features of thine own Prince, whenever the Image of a good one is ſet before thee. Religion indeed is ſo much both the Practice and the Care of our good Queen, that in this Reſpect her Enemies (if ſuch a Princeſs can have Enemies) muſt confeſs, that the World has ſeldom ſeen her Equal, never her Superior. In the midſt of outward Pomp and Glory, how conſtant, how regular is her Devotion; how juſt and becoming her Behaviour in the Preſence of

God,

God, that even thoſe who attend at the Altar may profit by the Example! With how tender an Eye of Compaſſion did ſhe regard the Poverty and Diſtreſs of the Chriſtian Prieſthood; and how did ſhe conſult the Honour of God and Religion, providing by her royal Bounty, that the Altar ſhould be attended, not by the Servants of Men waiting for Bread, but by the Freemen of the Lord! Ages to come ſhall give Glory to God for her, when they ſhall behold thoſe Monuments of her Piety, which are now but juſt riſing from their Foundations; a Glory that will not be the leſs hers, though we acknowledge (as in Juſtice and Gratitude we always muſt) how readily her faithful Commons enabled her to ſupport the Charge of ſo expenſive an Undertaking.

This Proſpect is ſo pleaſant, that here I could delight to dwell; but the Time, which ſpends much faſter than my Subject, bids me proceed.

Let us then take a tranſient View of the happy Effects of this religious Principle, the Fear of God, in the political Government of a juſt Prince.

Human Nature is much the ſame in all Parts of the World; there are the ſame Paſſions

ſions and Inclinations to be found in Men of different Countries; and therefore it is in vain to ſearch Nature, to find the Cauſes why ſome Nations enjoy inward Peace and Tranquillity, whilſt others are expoſed to Miſery and Confuſion. The Difference ſeems to lie in theſe two Points; the Laws and Conſtitutions of ſeveral Countries, and the Execution of thoſe Laws. Princes, who can forget the Character of their Maſter, whoſe Power they exerciſe, may eaſily forget the Character of their Subjects, over whoſe Perſons they reign; and though *he that ruleth over Men* ought to be juſt, becauſe Men are rational Creatures, and have a Right to be governed by the Laws of Reaſon and Juſtice; yet it is no Wonder that the Ruler who does not *fear God*, ſhould not *regard Men*. Power and Greatneſs are in themſelves great Temptations, mighty Corrupters of the Heart of Man; and unleſs there be the Fear of God to reſtrain thoſe evil Effects of worldly Grandeur, it muſt happen, that he that has the moſt Power will be leaſt able to uſe it well; and conſequently Want of Religion in the Prince muſt always End in the Slavery and Miſery of the People. But when a Ruler acts

acts under the Senſe of God's ſupreme Dominion, and knows that there is no proper legiſlative Power, but that of the Almighty; that the Part entruſted to him is a Ray iſſuing from the Divine Fountain; he will ſo uſe his Power as not to diſgrace the Giver of it, and exert it in Laws and Conſtitutions, worthy of the great Original from whence they flow: ſuch Laws muſt always be Honour to the Throne, Safety and Proſperity to the People.

With us the legiſlative Power is more happily adminiſtered than in any known Part of the World; and I may have Leave in this auguſt Aſſembly, to congratulate with my Country, that ſhe lives under no Law that is not of her own chooſing: a Privilege, which is the Glory of *Britain*, purchaſed with the Blood of our Anceſtors, and ought never to be parted with, but together with our own. But how is this Happineſs completed, when we have a Princeſs upon the Throne, as ready to give Life to any Law for the public Good, as her People can be to aſk it; who takes no other Pleaſure in her Power, but in making it beneficial to her Country; and then only thinks ſhe reigns, when ſhe can do good to Mankind!

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Wholeſome Laws, whatever Tendency they have to public Good, have no Effect, but as they are prudently adminiſtered, and vigorouſly executed; the Welfare therefore of Kingdoms does in great Meaſure depend upon the ſteady and wiſe Exerciſe of the executive Power: for though the Touch of the Sceptre may animate the Law, and give it Being; yet it is this Power which gives it Energy and Operation, and teaches it how to influence the Lives and Manners of the People; how to make them at once good and happy. In the Management of a corrupt Ruler, it is oftentimes made a Snare to the Lives and Fortunes of the beſt Subjects; but where the Fear of God directs the Prince, the Law is always a Protection to the Innocent, a Terror to the Wicked. In all human Laws there is an Imperfection, which would often make Juſtice degenerate into Cruelty, were not the Rigour of the Letter left ſubject to be moderated by the Reaſon and Equity of the Governor; for it being impoſſible to form a Rule that ſhall regard all the various Circumſtances that attend human Actions, the Law can in many Caſes conſider one Action but in one Light, and annexes the ſame Puniſhment to the

the ſame Crime, wherever found, not conſidering what it cannot foreſee, the Aggravations or Alleviations which may ariſe from the Circumſtances of Offenders: and yet in the Eye of Reaſon and Equity there is no truer Maxim than this, *Duo cum faciunt idem, non eſt idem*; from whence it comes to paſs, that oftentimes the material Action, and the moral Action, that is, the Action conſidered in all its Circumſtances, are in one and the ſame Inſtance of different Kinds; in which Caſe the Letter of the Law may find a Crime, where Reaſon and Equity can find no Criminal; or at leaſt not one deſerving to ſuffer the Severity of the Law. This is the proper Field for the Exerciſe of royal Mercy; for arbitrary Mercy, that does not regard the Offender's Merit, is rather Humour than Goodneſs, and is deſtructive of the Conſtitution; whereas true Mercy always ſupplies the Defects of it: for the Mercy of the Prince is not oppoſed to the Cruelty of the Law (for the Law has no Intention to be cruel), but it comes in to relieve the Law againſt the Imperfections to which all human Conſtitutions are ſubject. Juſtice herſelf is blind, and wants the royal Touch, which gives her

her the Eyes of Mercy to diſtinguiſh between the Crimes of Malice and Inadvertency.

From this View of the executive Power, it is eaſy to judge how great the Difference is between a Prince who rules in the Fear of the Lord, and one who has not God in all his Thoughts. Even Mercy, the choiceſt Flower of the Crown, and which has the kindeſt Aſpect on the Subject, may in an ill Hand become oppreſſive to the People; and ſo it always does when it is uſed to countenance or protect the Wicked againſt Juſtice; and to ſet thoſe who do not love the Law, above the Fear of it: but when the Sword of Juſtice is ſent forth, not to execute the Will of Man, or ſerve his Paſſions, but to purge the Land from Iniquity, and to root out Oppreſſion from the Earth; when Mercy follows cloſe behind, to ſcreen the ignorant, the inadvertent, the unfortunate Offenders, who ſinned not out of malicious Wickedneſs, from the rigorous Blows of Juſtice; then may it properly be ſaid, that *Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other.*

I ſhould injure the Character of our excellent Queen, ſhould I ſeem to labour in the Appli-

Application of theſe Praiſes to her, which are ſo much her own, that I doubt not but every one here has been beforehand with me, in bleſſing God for theſe rare Endowments of his Princeſs. Some Reigns, however full of Glory, yet give us a ſecret Horror, when we ſee our Annals ſtained with the richeſt Blood of the three Kingdoms; when we ſee the Sword always naked, but cannot diſcern the Hand that guides it, and are left doubtful whether it ſtrikes the Blows of Juſtice or Reſentment. But Poſterity ſhall find no ſuch Pain in reading the Hiſtory of theſe Times, which will appear as one continued Scene of Glory and Happineſs, and ſhine like the *Morning Light when the Sun riſeth, even like the Morning that has no Clouds.* And this leads me in the ſecond Place to conſider,

2. How great a Bleſſing a juſt Prince is to his People, which is repreſented, in the Text, under the Similitudes of the riſing Sun, and the flouriſhing Graſs ſpringing out of the Earth.

Good Laws duly executed are as much the Happineſs of the People, as they are the Support of the Crown; without them, Liberty would be our Ruin, and, inſtead of

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enjoying our *Freedom*, we ſhould periſh in our *Licentiouſneſs*; for Liberty does not conſiſt in being free from all Reſtraints; if it did, the wild Inhabitants on the Coaſt of *Africa* might more juſtly boaſt of their Liberty, than we do. Civil Liberty is the Child of the Law, and thrives beſt under the Guardianſhip of its Parent; and therefore a juſt Prince, as he will moſt regard the Law, will always be the beſt Patron of his People's Liberty; ſuch a Prince has no ſeparate Intereſt from his Country; he looks upon himſelf as the Head of the Body; and if any Member grieves, he ſuffers with it: he can never caſt an envious Eye upon the Privileges of his People, which he eſteems as his own, and values even as the Jewels of his Crown. How happy are the People who are in ſuch a Caſe; how bleſſed is the Nation whoſe Prince *feareth God!*

For, further, the very Example of ſuch a Ruler has a natural Tendency to promote the Peace and Welfare of the Kingdom. When Virtue ſhines from the Throne, it warms the Hearts of all below it, and the Advantage of the Station gives it an Influence not to be reſiſted; Religion in the Height of Greatneſs is an amiable Sight,

and

and the People will inſenſibly learn to imitate what they cannot help admiring. Would it not teach the haughtieſt Mind Humility, to ſee Majeſty itſelf lie proſtrate at the Altar, imploring the Divine Aſſiſtance with ſuch a Senſe of its Dependence, as is but rarely found in the loweſt Fortune? Muſt it not ſhame us into mutual Kindneſs and Benevolence, when we ſee with how uncommon a Love the Princeſs embraces all her Subjects, even the worſt deſerving; imitating the Example of Divine Mercy, which makes the *Sun to riſe both on the Juſt and on the Unjuſt?* Can the People refuſe Submiſſion to ſuch a Prince? Can they ſcruple to follow the Law as the Rule of their Obedience, which they ſee their Princeſs ſubmitting to as the Rule of her Government.

Laſtly, There is one Thing more, which comprehends in it all that a Nation can wiſh for, and which always attends the Government of a juſt Prince; I mean the Bleſſing and Protection of Heaven. As Kings are the immediate Miniſters of God, ſo are they his immediate Care; he ruleth both their Hearts and their Hands, and turneth them as ſeemeth beſt to his Wiſdom. It is eaſy for him to puniſh the Wickedneſs of a Prince

and his People, by making fooliſh the Wiſdom of their wiſe Men, and only ſuffering them to chooſe their own Deſtruction; it is as eaſy to reward the Good, by eſtabliſhing the Heart of the Prince in Council and in Wiſdom, and guiding him inſenſibly into the Road of Honour and Proſperity. Time would fail me to ſet before you the Inſtances of God's Judgments and Mercies. Thoſe of the former Sort (bleſſed be his Name) have no Relation to *this Day*; and for the latter, you might juſtly blame me, ſhould I ſearch for foreign or for diſtant Examples, when our *own Country* and our *own Times* furniſh us with ſuch ample Materials: *This Day*, as it is my *Subject*, ſo ſhall it be my *Witneſs* alſo; and I need call no other to prove the Happineſs of a People, whoſe Prince ruleth *in the Fear of God.*

The Virtues of the Royal Blood of *Britain* were never more amiably poſſeſſed than now, when the *Majeſty* of the Crown is diſplayed in the *Softneſs* of her Sex who wears it, and ſeems rather to invite than to command Obedience: ſo equally are the Graces mixed, that her Authority creates no Terror, her Mildneſs no Contempt; ſo tender is ſhe of the Privileges of her People,

that

that the Nation muſt ever praiſe her; ſo juſt to the Rights of the Crown, that her Succeſſors will never blame her. Her Reign in every Reſpect has been ſo juſt a Tranſcript of the Conſtitution, that Time perhaps may make it doubtful, whether our excellent Conſtitution were not a Copy drawn from the Example of her Government.

If the State may thus rejoice in the Care of her Princeſs, the *Church* has equal Right to boaſt of her Protection. Our Queen was born within her Pale, and learnt betimes to know and love her: when the Fears of Popery ſurrounded her, and when every Proſpect, wherever ſhe turned her Eyes, was dark and gloomy; when ſome who *wore* her Honours, *forſook* her Cauſe, and ſome ſilently lamented her Condition; in that Day of her Diſtreſs, our Princeſs miſliked her not, but followed the *worſt* of her Fortunes, till the Wiſdom of Providence has raiſed her at laſt to become the Author of her *beſt*, to be a nurſing Mother to the Church and all her Children.

Whilſt *Britain* has been thus cheriſhed, thus happy at Home, under the Influence of a mild Government, ſhe has not been leſs glorious abroad, extending her victorious

Arms to every Country, either to protect her Friends, or to ſubdue her Foes. We had been ſo long unaccuſtomed to Succeſs, that it was thought a Conqueſt not to be ſubdued; a Triumph, to defend ourſelves: the *Britiſh* Victory ſeemed to pine for her ancient Heroes, her *Harrys*, and her *Edwards*, and ſcarcely lived upon the faded Honours of *Creſſy* Field and *Agincourt*, till the Genius of *this Day* aroſe, and taught her once more to gather freſh Laurels in diſtant Countries. To ſuch a Height of Glory has this *Female* Reign arrived, ſuch Honour and ſuch Triumphs has it brought our Nation, that ſhould any future *King* prove unfortunate, *Britain* perhaps, grown ſuperſtitious upon the Succeſſes of her *Queen*, will wiſh, *He had been a Woman.*

But great as theſe Succeſſes were, yet ſtill they brought a Grief with them, which eaſily found its Way to a compaſſionate Heart: the Queen could not hear of Victory without lamenting the Loſs of her brave Countrymen, without pitying even her conquered Foes; and ſo tender a Regard has ſhe for Mankind, that notwithſtanding all theſe Honours of the Field, ſhe reckons it the Glory of her Reign, that ſhe has

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ſtopped even the Triumph of her Arms, by Peace: and gave the haraſſed Nations leave to reſpire.

One Thing only ſhe wants to complete her Happineſs, to ſee her Subjects unite in Love and mutual Confidence; to ſee thoſe Heats and Animoſities buried in Oblivion, which threaten the Peace of our *Iſrael.* But why do I ſully the Glories of this Day, with mention of our Diviſions, thoſe Wounds of our Country, at which her beſt Life flows out, and leaves her ſickly in the very Seaſon of her Youth, and whilſt all her Honours bloom freſh around her? How earneſtly has the Queen commanded, exhorted, entreated, nay even begged of you to forget your Reſentments? And could you but offer up to her the Quarrels of your Country, it would be a more welcome Preſent, than ſhould you lay the Treaſures of both *Indies* at her Feet.

Thus happy in the Affections of her Queen, *Britain* muſt ever think of her with Joy and Pleaſure: and yet one Circumſtance there is that *often* gives her Pain, *always* when ſhe reflects, that her Princeſs is mortal; witneſs, her late Diſtraction, when uncertain Fame variouſly reported her Princeſs's

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Illneſs. Not *Rome* was more diſmayed when *Hannibal* was at her Gates; every Thing was Fear and Confuſion, and Men began to look ſuſpiciouſly on each other, as if in every Face they had ſeen a Foe; the *Treaſury of the City*, one would have thought was plundering; and yet no Enemy was near, but *Britain* in her Diſorder was preying on herſelf.

Bleſſed be the Power, the Almighty Power, that has diſpelled theſe Fears! Let every Heart be lifted up in Praiſe to his holy Name, who hath given Life and Salvation to his Servant, and hath not *denied the Requeſt of* her *Lips*.

And yet when ſhe *requeſted* Life, it was for her Country's Sake, and not her own; her Mortality is what ſhe oftener and more willingly thinks on than we do; and whenever ſhe does, finds nothing to diſturb her Mind, but the Concern for her People, who will be left behind her: a Concern that has more than once been expreſſed in the moſt generous Regard to Poſterity, by providing for the future Peace and Happineſs of theſe Kingdoms, in the Settlement of the Crown on the ILLUSTRIOUS HOUSE OF HANOVER. A Bleſſing, for which the Nation

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can never be thankful enough. But it raiſes an Indignation unbecoming *this Day*, to hear *ſome* pleading their Affection to this happy Settlement, as a Mark and Diſtinction of their Party; a Settlement, which is undeniably our common Good, and, I truſt alſo, our common Care. But let no Proſpect of diſtant Happineſs, how entertaining ſoever, render us inſenſible of the preſent Good we enjoy; but let every Wiſh that looks to the Succeſſion, center in this Point, *that we may never ſee it; that our Country may never loſe it:* whilſt *we* live, may *this Day* return (and whilſt it does return, it always will) with freſh Honour: but when we are forgot; when ſhe, who is our Glory, is called to a better Throne, may late Poſterity enjoy the Fruits of her Care, in deriving the Crown upon ſo noble a Family. As long as our Wiſhes are confined within theſe Limits, there is no Reaſon to make *a Secret* of our Affections to the Proteſtant Succeſſion; it is an Affection which every Lover of his Country ought frankly to proclaim; which is the proper Way of keeping this *common Concern* from becoming a *Party Cauſe*; and ſtilling thoſe Fears and Jealouſies, which are deſtructive of our Peace and Happineſs.

May he, who ſtilleth the raging of the Seas, and the Noiſe of their Waves, and the Tumult of the People, ſend us Peace and Concord, and Minds capable of enjoying the Bleſſings which he has ſo plentifully ſhowered on us: and to complete our Happineſs, may he add Length of Days to our Gracious Sovereign, and continue her to be a Comfort to her People, till ſhe ſhall as far ſurpaſs the *oldeſt* of her Predeceſſors, *in Number of Years*, as ſhe has already outdone the *braveſt*, in *Honour* and *Glory*.

DISCOURSE V.

Acts vii. 25.

For he ſuppoſed his Brethren would have underſtood how that God by his Hand would deliver them; but they underſtood not.

THE Text is Part of the dying Speech of St. *Stephen*, which he delivered to the High Prieſt and the People, juſt before he was offered up a glorious Sacrifice for the Truth of the Goſpel of Chriſt. The Deſign of it was to ſet before the People of *Iſrael* the Hiſtory of their Redemption from Slavery and Idolatry, and to ſtir them up to attend to the preſent Offers of Peace through Chriſt Jeſus, by ſhewing them the fatal Miſtakes they had often made in deſpiſing or abuſing former Mercies. *Moſes* was

was their great Prophet and their Lawgiver; *Moſes* was in the higheſt Veneration among them; for his Sake, and to preſerve the Authority of his Laws, they refuſed to hearken to any other Teacher; and therefore rejected the Goſpel as tending to ſubvert the Conſtitutions of *Moſes*. Yet how was this Man received? How was this Deliverer entertained? Was he not evil-intreated? Was he not, before he could work their Deliverance, forced to ſeek his own by an haſty Flight from them into the Land of *Midian*? When he appeared in the Spirit of the Lord, to avenge the Wrongs of his People, and ſmote the *Egyptian* who oppreſſed the *Iſraelite*, the very next Day he was reproached by his Brethren for the Murder, as they called it: for he had given them a Provocation which it ſeems they could not bear; he *had ſhewed himſelf unto them as they ſtrove, and would have ſet them at one again, ſaying, Sirs, ye are Brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?* So far did the private Paſſions and Reſentments prevail againſt the Conſiderations of public Safety, that delivering them from the *Egyptians* was no Merit, becauſe he endeavoured alſo to deliver them from one another.

To

To draw Parallels between the Hiſtories in Scripture, and thoſe of our own Times, is ſo ſlippery a Subject, ſo liable to be influenced by the Paſſions of the Speaker, who can eaſily overlook the Circumſtances which ſuit not with his View, chooſe out and adorn thoſe which do; that in ſuch Applications of Scripture Hiſtory, there is very great Danger of miſſing the Scripture Doctrine, and publiſhing our own partial Sentiments, under the Cover of the Book of God, which was given to correct and amend them. I ſhall therefore, without trying to ſhew you how like we are in all Reſpects, or in any, to the People of *Iſrael*; or how nearly our Enemies reſemble the *Egyptians*; confine myſelf to ſuch Obſervations, and ſuch Applications of them, as naturally ariſe from the Text and our own Circumſtances.

Firſt then, we may obſerve from the Text, that *Moſes*, though raiſed by God in a wonderful Manner to be the Deliverer of his People, yet fell under great Diſcouragements from his Countrymen for whoſe Sake he was raiſed up.

The People of *Iſrael*, at the Time of the Birth of *Moſes*, were under ſo ſevere a Bondage,

dage, that there was no human Proſpect of Deliverance: thoſe who were of Strength ſufficient, were held to ſuch conſtant and hard Labour, that they had neither Time nor Ability to contrive any Thing for themſelves. Could it be expected that any Genius ſhould ariſe from among the Brick-kilns, to reſtore the Liberty of *Iſrael*; or that one employed from his Childhood in gathering Straw ſhould attempt to ſet up the promiſed Kingdom? And that mere Srength and Number might not prevail, the *Egyptians* had taken care to deſtroy the Male Children of *Iſrael*; ſo that the Proſpect for the next Generation was even worſe than what the preſent had. But the Providence of God turned theſe Circumſtances to his own wiſe Ends. Had not the King of *Egypt* commanded the Male Children to be deſtroyed, *Moſes*, it is probable, had been bred as he was born, a Slave, and ſent, as ſoon as he was able, to take his Share of the hard Labour impoſed on his Countrymen: but by being expoſed for Fear of the cruel King's Command, he fell into the Hands of the Princeſs of *Egypt*, and had his Education even in the Court of *Pharoah*, and *became learned in all the Wiſdom*

of

of the Egyptians, and was mighty in Words and Deeds. By this Means he was qualified to undertake the great Work which God had prepared for him; and *Iſrael*, though in the loweſt Condition, had one to go before them, who had been brought up in the Dignity of a Prince; and yet though he had lived in the Plenty of *Egypt*, and flouriſhed in the Court of its great King, he forgot not his diſtreſſed Countrymen, but he partook in all their Miſeries, with an Affection which became him who was one Day to be their Deliverer. One would think that theſe Circumſtances, together with the Prophecies relating to their Deliverance, ſhould have pointed out the Perſon intended by God to bring about their Redemption: *Moſes* himſelf thought he ſhould at leaſt have been favoured by his Countrymen in his noble Enterprize for their Service; *he ſuppoſed his Brethren would have underſtood how that God by his Hand would deliver them:* but, as it follows in the Text, *they underſtood not.* This was ſo diſcouraging a Circumſtance, that he ſeems to have laid aſide the Thoughts of being able to ſerve them; he found, that to accompliſh the Deliverance of *Iſrael*, he muſt ſtruggle as well againſt

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the *Iſraelite*, as the *Egyptian*, and ſubdue the Slaves in order to their Redemption, as well as the Tyrants who oppreſſed them. And yet notwithſtanding this Blindneſs of the People, the Murderer, as they called him, was ordained by God to be their Prince and Deliverer; and they were at laſt happily convinced of their Miſtake, by receiving at his Hand the Bleſſings promiſed to their Forefathers.

From whence we may learn, in the ſecond Place, what Confidence and Truſt we ought to put in God for the Deliverance of his Church and true Religion, notwithſtanding the hopeleſs Proſpects which ariſe from human Affairs.

Had we been to judge by the Rules of human Wiſdom and Policy, what Hope was there that *Moſes* ſhould be the Deliverer of that People, in whom he had ſo little Intereſt, that he was forced to fly from them for his own Safety? But the Counſels of God are not to be defeated either by the Folly or the Madneſs of the People; and his Purpoſes ſhall ſtand, be thoſe whom he intends to puniſh never ſo furious or outrageous, or thoſe whom he intends to ſave never ſo weak and blind to their own Intereſt.

tereſt. And indeed, were ſuch great Events to be guided by human Counſels, a Nation might be deſtroyed before they could agree in what Method, or by what Means to be ſaved; ſo variouſly are Men drawn by their Paſſions and their Intereſt, that it is very difficult for them to concur in preſerving what all are equally concerned to preſerve. In theſe Circumſtances, it is very natural for Men to dwell upon the melancholy Proſpect, and to forebode that Ruin to themſelves and their Country, which ſeems to be the juſt Conſequence of ſuch diſtracted Counſels: but they ought to reflect, that there is one higher than all, who can ſtill the Rage of the People, and bring Peace and Safety out of Tumult and Diſorder, with as much Eaſe as he produced Light out of Darkneſs, when he ſaid, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*. Were it not for the Comfort ariſing from this providential Care of God over the World, the beſt Thing a Wiſe Man could do for himſelf, would be to get out of it as ſoon as he could; the only Way to ſecure himſelf from the Miſeries and Calamities which Men by their Folly and their Wickedneſs are perpetually drawing down upon themſelves and others. Nay,

could

could we depend upon this Care and Protection of God no further than our own Merits would juſtify our Expectation, we might have Reaſon ſtill to deſpond. But as there is another Time in which all Men ſhall yield an Account of their own Doings; and as God has greater Views oftentimes in ſaving and deſtroying Nations, than puniſhing or rewarding the preſent Inhabitants; and as Mercy and Goodneſs incline him to deal graciouſly with Sinners, in allowing them further Means and Opportunities of Repentance and Amendment, we may reaſonably hope from his Mercy and Goodneſs to be more favourably dealt with, than our Conſciences, if ſtrictly examined, can give us Ground to expect. And if ever theſe Hopes are juſtifiable, then moſt certainly they are, when the Honour of God is immediately concerned in the Event; and when the Truth of that holy Religion which Chriſt ſealed with his own Blood, is Part of the Controverſy. The People of *Iſrael* had as little to boaſt of on their own Behalf as other Nations; but they were choſen by God to bear his Name, to be Witneſſes of his Truth in the dark Ages of the World, to prepare the Way for the coming

of

of our Lord and Maſter; and though they were often afflicted, yet they were as often reſtored, till at laſt they were utterly rejected for denying that great Prophet, for whoſe Sake, and for the Completion of the Prophecies relating to him, they had been ſo often and ſo long preſerved.

Theſe are the Obſervations I had to make to you from the Words of the Text. The Application of them to ourſelves, is what I believe every Body ſees, as well as myſelf. And yet I beg your Patience, whilſt with all Truth and Sincerity I diſcharge my Duty and Conſcience as a Miniſter of this reformed Church, now openly attacked by its profeſſed and inveterate Enemies. Since the Beginning of the Reformation in this Kingdom, we never had ſo good a Proſpect of a firm Eſtabliſhment of the Proteſtant Religion, as at this Time; and yet I verily think we never had leſs Senſe of it; our Deliverance is near us, but we underſtand it not. Whilſt we have been ſtriving together about Things, however dear to us, yet ſtill of leſs Conſequence moſt certainly than our Liberty and Religion, we have been in Danger of being ſwallowed up by the common Enemy; and the People, never till now inſen-

ſible of the Fears of Popery, have ſtood by unconcerned, ſeeming, as it were, to invite that Slavery and Oppreſſion, which coſt their Forefathers ſo much Blood and Treaſure to get rid of. Could you have thought that this Soil, ſo often watered and enriched by the Blood of Martyrs, ſhed by the cruel Hands of Popiſh Tyranny, ſo often miraculouſly ſaved by Providence from *Roman* Slavery and Superſtition, would ever yield ſuch Fruit as this? That *England*, famed throughout the World for the Bulwark of the Proteſtant Religion; hated by her Enemies, and envied even by her Friends, for the beſt eſtabliſhed Church in *Chriſtendom*, ſhould ſo far forget herſelf, and the God who ſaved her, as to look with any Patience upon thoſe Chains from which ſhe was ſo lately delivered. It is ſtill more ſurpriſing, that this ſhould happen at the very Time when Providence ſeems to have laid the beſt Foundation for our Peace and Security, by ſettling a Proteſtant Prince in the Throne of theſe Kingdoms, happy in Heirs to ſucceed him in his Crowns, and to perpetuate the Bleſſing of Liberty and pure Religion to theſe Nations. Whatever we think of this Advantage, our Enemies certainly

tainly judge right of it; they foreſee, that if this Settlement prevails, their Hopes are at an End, and therefore they are ready to hazard all to diſturb and overthrow it: and it ſeems to have been the main Point of the Policy of the Court of *Rome*, with Reſpect to theſe Kingdoms, from the earlieſt Times of the Reformation, to ſecure themſelves againſt a Succeſſion of Proteſtant Princes. When we have had a Proſpect of this Happineſs, then we have been attacked with their utmoſt Fury; *Rome* has plyed all her Engines to prevent this Foundation being laid amongſt us, of laſting Peace and Security. At other Times, when the Succeſſion has been doubtful, and ſhe had any Hopes of ſeeing one of her own Communion exalted, ſhe has moved by gentler Steps, and her Fury has been abated by the Hope of ſwaying the Sceptre of a Son of her own.

If we take a ſhort View of this Period, it will help not only to convince us of the Truth of this Obſervation, but alſo to give us a juſt Proſpect of the Security and Happineſs, which are now prepared for us, if we do not obſtinately ſhut our Eyes againſt the Things which make for our Peace.

The Reformation had its firſt Riſe here

in the Days of *Henry* the Eighth; he went ſo far as to throw out the Pope, though at the ſame Time he zealouſly maintained Popery. The firſt Breach happened upon the Point of the King's Divorce; and though the Court of *Rome* treated it as a Matter of Law and Conſcience, and ſent it about to their Canoniſts and Divines, yet were they in Truth guided by mere politic Views: the Queen was nearly related to the Emperor; and *Germany* was then in ſuch a State, many of its Princes having received the Reformation, that *Cæſar*'s Power was never more wanted, nor more courted by *Rome*. In this Difficulty the Pope choſe rather to hazard loſing the King, than the Emperor: and the King, impatient of the ill Uſage and artificial Delays of *Rome*, took a ſhorter Way to his Divorce, and threw off all Subjection to the Pope. Yet in his Days he maintained himſelf and Kingdoms in tolerable Peace and Quiet: the Court of *Rome* had Reaſon not to drive to the utmoſt Extremity; Popery ſtill remained in its moſt eſſential Parts; a fair Inlet ſome Time or other to a Return of the Papal Power. It was doubtful alſo what Iſſue the new Queen might have; and the next in Appearance

was

was tied not only to Popery, but to the Pope alſo, upon the Plenitude of whoſe Power her own Legitimacy depended. When the King had a Son born, yet ſtill there were the Caſualties of Childhood to ſupport their Hopes, and a Proſpect of an Infancy in the Throne, which could not but afford Opportunities of practiſing on the Kingdom for their own Advantage. In the young King's Time the Reformation was puſhed with Vigour; but alas, his Days were few, and *Rome* had all his Time the Proſpect of a Popiſh Succeſſor, which did not only ſupport her Hopes, but in ſome Meaſure abate her Fury. When Queen *Mary* came to the Throne, then was the Time to ſee with what Spirit Popery is to be reſtored in theſe Kingdoms: the Flames of Perſecution were kindled in all Parts; the Biſhops, the Clergy, and the People fell promiſcuouſly a Sacrifice to the enraged Deity of *Rome:* nay, ſo far did the Fury of theſe Barbarians extend, that the helpleſs Infant, forced from the Mother's Womb by the Extremity of her Torture, was thrown into the Flames again, as guilty of the Parent's Hereſy, and under the Sentence of the Holy Court, which had condemned the Mother without

excepting her Womb. It would be endleſs to relate to you the fiery Trials of that Time, when no Age, no Sex found Mercy; but old and young, Men and Women were led in Triumph to the Stake, and were forced to ſeal the Confeſſion of their Faith with their deareſt Blood; and yet at that Time there was *a Woman* in the Throne, in herſelf not cruel, and by the Tenderneſs of her Sex inclined to Compaſſion; ſhe was alſo obliged to her Country, which reſcued her from a Rebellion, formed in the very Beginning of her Reign, and placed her on the Throne of her Anceſtors in Spite of Oppoſition: but neither the Tenderneſs of her Sex, nor her natural Compaſſion, nor the Senſe of Gratitude, could prevail againſt a Popiſh Confeſſor, who firſt miſguided her Conſcience, and then by her Conſcience over-ruled all the Sentiments of Nature and Humanity. If a Woman could do all this; if one obliged by her Country could be ſo unnatural in her Returns to it, what have we to expect from one, who, if ever he comes, will come with Anger and Reſentment againſt his Country; who muſt be ſet on the Throne by the Treaſure and Power of *Rome*, which muſt be repaid in the

the Blood of Hereticks; that is, in the Blood of the People of *England?* But to proceed.

The main Policy of this Reign was to ſecure ſuch a Succeſſion of Princes as might for ever daſh the Hopes of the Reformation in *England:* and for this Purpoſe the wiſeſt Step was taken, that human Policy could contrive: *Spain* was the only Kingdom of *Europe* not tainted with Hereſy (as the Reformation is called); its King was young, and bigotted to the Superſtition of *Rome*, and therefore choſen out as a proper Match for the Queen of *England*; and had that Marriage produced Heirs according to the Hopes of our Enemies, *England*, it is probable, had been at this Time as deeply plunged in the Darkneſs of Popery, as *Spain* itſelf; where Superſtition and Idolatry appear in more ghaſtly Forms, than they do even at *Rome*, where the Court of Inquiſition ſits in the fulleſt Triumph, and ſcatters Death and Deſtruction throughout the Realm. But the Hope of Iſſue failing, together with the Queen's Life, the glorious Princeſs *Elizabeth* aſcended the Throne, and the Reformation began once more to breathe in *England*. In the Beginning of her Reign, Hopes were

conceived by the Popiſh Faction, that ſhe might match with a Prince of their Communion, and their darling *Philip* was prevailed on to offer himſelf. But the Queen was too wiſe to match with a Prince, where the Legitimacy of the Marriage muſt have proved the Illegitimacy of her Birth; ſince ſhe could have had her Siſter's Huſband only in Virtue of that Power by which her Father had his Brother's Wife. After *Philip*, ſeveral others were propoſed; but theſe Hopes failing, the *Roman Catholicks*, who had hitherto been permitted to join with the eſtabliſhed Church, to keep the Way open to an eaſier Reconcilement, were by the Power of the Pope entirely ſeparated. In the Queen's old Age, when the Thoughts of her marrying were laid aſide, and the Hopes of a Popiſh Succeſſor in great Meaſure defeated by the Fate of the Queen of *Scots*, there was an Attempt from the ſame Quarter to ſet up a *Spaniſh* Prince for Succeſſor, that they might obtain by Birthright what they could not obtain by Marriage; and a Book full of Learning was publiſhed by *Parſons* the Jeſuit, to make out the *Infanta*'s Title to theſe Crowns; ſo well did they underſtand, that nothing leſs than the

the greateſt Power could be ſufficient to introduce the worſt Religion. By all which Steps, through theſe ſeveral Reigns, it plainly appears, that the utmoſt Deſire of the Court of *Rome* is to have a Popiſh Prince on this Throne; they reckon their Work done, if once they obtain this Point: give them but a Popiſh Prince to their Heart, they will ſoon inſtruct him what to do with Vows and Promiſes, and Coronation-Oaths; and in ſuch a Caſe the People likewiſe would be inſtructed to know their own Intereſt, when it was too late to help themſelves.

When *James* the Firſt came to the Crown, ſurrounded by an hopeful Iſſue of Proteſtant Princes, the Cauſe of Popery was at the laſt Gaſp: they ſaw their Downfall if this Family ſtood, in which there was a Proſpect of a long Succeſſion of Proteſtant Heirs. A deſperate Caſe requires deſperate Remedies; here was no Room for Art and Management, and therefore Violence was now firſt uſed, and the horrid Plot of the *Fifth of November* was contrived, which, had it took Effect, would have rid them not only of a Proteſtant King, but of their greateſt Fear, the Proteſtant Heirs.

By what Methods they afterwards diſtreſſed

treſſed the King, and laid the Foundation of that Ruin which broke out in his Son's Time, to the Deſtruction of this Church and Nation, and one of the beſt Princes it ever had, would be tedious to relate. Nor need I ſay much of the ſucceeding Reigns, which ſo nearly reſemble the former, that from the Reſtoration to our preſent gracious King, the Caſe ſeems to be much the ſame as it was from the Reformation to *James* the Firſt. King *Charles* the Second had no Iſſue; and if he was not himſelf a Papiſt, his Succeſſor was, in whoſe Time this Church and Nation were brought to the Brink of Ruin: and though he had been ſaved from a Bill of Excluſion by the Intereſts and Loyalty of the Church, yet no ſooner was he on the Throne, but he impriſoned her Biſhops, diſpenſed with her Laws, and broke down all the Fences that were raiſed for her Security; in which Confuſion ſhe had utterly periſhed, had not the Providence of God reſcued her by the Means of a Proteſtant Prince, happily allied to the Crown of *England* by Marriage, and by Birth. In his and his Succeſſor's Time, the Eyes of the Popiſh Faction were upon the Pretender to the Crown, and all their Hopes centered

tered in him. As long as there was any Proſpect of defeating the Proteſtant Succeſſion, they kept themſelves within Bounds, and were contented to work by Policy, and not by Force: but no ſooner did they ſee a King of the reformed Communion, with a numerous Iſſue mounted on the Throne, but they threw off the Maſk; as they did in the like Caſe of *James* the Firſt, attempted directly his Deſtruction and Ruin. And will not all this teach us wherein our true Intereſt does conſiſt? *Fas eſt et ab hoſte doceri:* if we cannot judge for ourſelves, let us learn of our Enemies to know wherein to place our Security. The two greateſt Efforts of Popery to bring Ruin upon this Church and Nation by Force and Violence, have been, one at this Time, the other in *James* the Firſt's Reign; and their great Provocation was, to ſee a Succeſſion of Proteſtant Princes likely to be eſtabliſhed among us. As this is their Fear, ſo is it our Security. And if we conſider the Circumſtances of Times paſt, the doubtful Condition we have often been in, when our Happineſs has depended on one ſingle Life, we ſhall have Reaſon to think that Providence has both wiſely and mercifully provided for our Safety at this

Time.

Time. When the Family of *James* the Firſt was partly corrupted with Popery, and near being extinguiſhed for want of Heirs, how providentially did God preſerve one Branch free from the Infection, from which the preſent royal Family is deſcended! And yet, to come to that which is the melancholy Part of the Application, how inſenſible do we ſeem to be of this Bleſſing! What Rebellions, what Tumults and Riots have we ſeen in the ſhort Compaſs of this Reign! as if the People had forgot not only the Care of their King, but of their Country, their Religion, and themſelves: as if the Fears of Popery were all vain; as if Superſtition and Idolatry, and the very Terrors of an Inquiſition, were the mere Deluſions of a ſick Mind. Theſe are the Bleſſings which ſome are contending for; theſe will be the Rewards of their pious Undertaking to ſet up a Popiſh Prince over theſe Kingdoms.

It is an eaſier Matter to kindle the Fires of Popery and Perſecution, than it will be to extinguiſh them. Should the Wiſhes of ſome take Place, and a Popiſh Prince prevail over us; and ſhould he not be ſo good as they vainly expect he will, where will they

they go next for Protection? What Prince or Family in *Europe* is left, to which they may fly for Succour? The Proteſtant Religion has its laſt Support; if it fails now, there is no other Refuge; and ſhould it be once loſt in *England*, it will dwindle every where elſe; Popery will over-run all like a Torrent, and we ſhall return to a worſe Darkneſs, than that from which we came out. If therefore we have any Senſe of Loyalty to our preſent gracious King; if we have not quite forgot that Obedience upon which we have ſo long valued ourſelves; if we have any Concern for our Religion and the Welfare of our Souls, which depends on it; if we have any natural Affection for our Country, our Friends, our Families, or ourſelves; let us ſhew it by a cheerful and ſteady Obedience to the Prince whom God has ſet over us. All theſe Motives plead not ſo much for him as for ourſelves: for if ever Obedience to their Prince was the true Intereſt of a People, now is the Time it is ſo.

The ſecond Obſervation I made to you, was, that notwithſtanding the hopeleſs Proſpect of human Affairs, the Text affords Ground of Dependence on God.

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In this Part of our Caſe, the Application, I bleſs God, is made to my Hands. His Care over us has already appeared, and we are like to be ſaved whether we deſire it or no.

Let us then raiſe our Hearts to a juſt Senſe of our Deliverance, that we may unfeignedly adore his holy Name for all his Mercies; and let us ſtrive together to promote his Glory by a conſtant and ſtedfaſt Adherence to the Church eſtabliſhed, by a dutiful and ready Submiſſion to our Prince, and by Love and Charity one among another.

DISCOURSE VI.

MATT. iv. 17.

From that Time Jeſus began to preach, and to ſay, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.

THE Deſign of this Meeting being to promote the Propagation of the Goſpel in foreign Parts; and the Succeſs of this Work depending on ſuch Methods as human Prudence can ſuggeſt, now left deſtitute of thoſe miraculous Aſſiſtances, which the Church of Chriſt in her Infancy enjoyed; the Occaſion will naturally ſuggeſt to your Thoughts, the Conſideration of the Encouragements and Difficulties which attend this Undertaking; and of the Methods proper to attain this End, ſo much to be deſired by every good and pious Chriſtian: but

but yet, ſince I ſucceed much abler Men, who have gone before me in the Performance of this Duty, and have with great Judgment conſidered theſe neceſſary Points; ſince alſo I ſtand at preſent before ſo many much abler, whoſe Thoughts have long dwelt upon this important Subject; I beg Leave to decline the unequal Taſk, and to ſpend the Time allotted me in conſidering upon what Foot the Goſpel firſt ſet out in the World, when it was publiſhed by our bleſſed Saviour and his Apoſtles; and what it had to recommend it to the Reaſon of Mankind, abſtracted from thoſe Signs and Wonders, which were wrought by the Hand of God for its Confirmation.

The holy Evangeliſt tells us, that the firſt Doctrine which our bleſſed Lord taught, was that of Repentance; *From that Time Jeſus began to preach, and to ſay, Repent:* That he taught it as neceſſary to qualify Men for the Kingdom of Heaven; *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.* What is to be underſtood by the *Kingdom of Heaven's being at Hand,* may be learnt from the parallel Place in St. *Mark,* chap. i. 14, 15. *Now after that John was put in Priſon, Jeſus came into Galilee, preaching the*

the Goſpel of the Kingdom of God, and ſaying, The Time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at Hand: Repent ye, and believe the Goſpel. Now whatever we underſtand by *the Kingdom of Heaven*, it is plain that the Reaſon why it was ſaid to be at Hand, was becauſe the Time was fulfilled, for the publiſhing the Goſpel to all the World; and that the Exhortation in St. *Matthew, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*, is the ſame with that recorded in St. *Mark, Repent ye, and believe the Goſpel.* From whence it is evident, that Repentance was inculcated, as neceſſary to prepare us for receiving the Goſpel of Chriſt Jeſus.

The ſame appears likewiſe, from the preaching of *John* the Baptiſt, who taught the ſame Doctrine, and in the ſame Words with our bleſſed Saviour; he was that *Voice crying in the Wilderneſs, Prepare ye the Way of the Lord, make his Paths ſtraight.* As it was his proper Office to prepare the World for the Reception of the great Prophet, who was to come after him, we may certainly conclude from his Preaching, what was the neceſſary Preparation required; and as his Doctrine was confined to the ſingle Point of Repentance, this was undoubtedly the ne-

ceſſary Qualification for all who were to receive the Goſpel of the Kingdom of God.

As our Saviour, and his Forerunner the Baptiſt, taught Repentance as the firſt neceſſary Step to the Goſpel; ſo alſo did the Apoſtles. When the Twelve were ſent out by our bleſſed Lord in the 6th of St *Mark*, the Evangeliſt tells us in the 12th Verſe, that *they went out and preached, that Men ſhould repent:* St. *Peter*, in his firſt Sermon recorded in the 2d of the *Acts*, exhorts his Countrymen to *repent, and be baptized, for the Remiſſion of Sins*, Verſe 38. And in the 20th of the *Acts*, St. *Paul* tells us how he had ſpent his Time, *teſtifying both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, Repentance towards God, and Faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, Verſe 21ſt; which were the very Topics inſiſted on by our Lord, when he called upon Men to *repent* and to *believe the Goſpel*. The ſame Account he gives of his preaching to King *Agrippa*, *Acts* xxvi. 20. namely, that he had ſhewed both to *Jew* and *Gentile*, *that they ſhould repent, and turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance*. In the 11th of the Acts it is ſaid, that the Apoſtles and Brethren in *Judea* heard that *the Gentiles alſo had received the Word*

Word of God. St. *Peter* was called upon to render an Account of his Conduct, in communicating the Privileges of the Goſpel to the Gentiles: when he had vindicated himſelf to their Satisfaction, they thus expreſſed themſelves: *Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life.* Now it is evident, that what God granted to the Gentiles, was the ſame that the Gentiles received, and therefore *Repentance unto Life* was the *Word of God*, publiſhed to the World by our Lord and his Apoſtles; and for this Reaſon, the Writer to the *Hebrews* reckons Repentance from dead Works, and Faith towards God, to be the firſt Principles, or main Foundation of the Doctrine of Chriſt. *Heb.* vi. 1.

Before I proceed to lay before you the Conſequences, which ariſe from this State of the Caſe, I beg leave to make an Obſervation or two, in Order to clear the Way for what is to follow: You may obſerve then, that Repentance was the very firſt Thing inſiſted on, wherever the Goſpel was publiſhed, before any new Law or Doctrine was promulged, or ſo much as mentioned. The Proof of this I need not attempt, ſince the Paſſages already produced

do plainly contain it, and indeed the Nature of the Thing ſpeaks it; for the Repentance taught, could not reſpect any new Law to be delivered to the World, againſt which no Offence having been committed, no Repentance could be required.

Secondly, That the Goſpel was uſhered in by the Doctrine of Repentance, not only when it was delivered to the *Jew*, but alſo when it was proclaimed to the *Gentile* World. The *Jews* lived under the Divine Law, delivered by *Moſes*, and were guilty of many Offences committed againſt that Law, to which they owed Obedience: but the *Gentiles* were not under that Law, nor had they been ever called to the Obedience of it; and therefore the Repentance which was taught, as the Introduction of the Goſpel, did not regard any particular Inſtitution, but that general Law of Nature, to which every Man owed Obedience, in Virtue of the Reaſon and Underſtanding, with which God had endowed him.

Thirdly, That true Repentance requires Change of Mind, and leads to a Reformation of Manners, and a due Obedience for the future to that Law of Righteouſneſs, againſt which the Offence was committed:

for

for where the Obligation of Obedience to any Law ceaſes, there can be no Call to Repentance for Diſobedience. This Doctrine is ſo plain in Scripture, and ſo uniformly taught by all the Miniſters of our Church, that I would willingly ſuppoſe no one ignorant of it. The Baptiſt ſufficiently explained himſelf, exhorting ſuch as came to his Baptiſm, *to bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance:* to which general Inſtruction his particular Admonitions always correſpond. To the hard-hearted and uncharitable *Jews*, he ſaid, *He that hath two Coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath Meat, let him do likewiſe.* To the Publicans, whoſe Crime was Extortion, he ſaid, *Exact no more than that which is appointed you.* To the Soldiers, who were noted for Rapine, falſe Information, and the like Vices, he ſaid, *Do Violence to no Man, neither accuſe any falſely, and be content with your Wages.* In like Manner, our bleſſed Saviour, when he diſmiſſed the Woman taken in Adultery, he let her depart with this Advice, *Go, and ſin no more.* So did he inſtruct alſo the Man whom he had ſet free from the Infirmity, which was the Puniſhment of his Iniquity; *Behold thou*

art made whole; ſin no more, leſt a worſe Thing come unto thee: teaching neither the one nor the other any new Doctrine with reſpect to their particular Caſes, but referring both back to that Law which they had tranſgreſſed, as the proper Meaſure of their future Obedience.

I ſhall now proceed to lay before you ſuch Conſequences as ſeem to me to be the natural Reſult of this Method made uſe of by our bleſſed Lord and his Apoſtles, in publiſhing the Goſpel to Mankind.

And the firſt is this: That the Religion of the Goſpel is the true original Religion of Reaſon and Nature. It is ſo *in Part:* it is all that, and more. Repentance was neceſſary, but it was not all. Repentance was the firſt Step towards Chriſtian Perfection. See Heb. vi. 1.

This appears by conſidering the Nature of that Repentance which our Lord, and thoſe who came after him in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, preached to the World: Repentance ſuppoſes a Tranſgreſſion, and Tranſgreſſion ſuppoſes a Law; for as the Apoſtle argues, *where there is no Law, there is no Tranſgreſſion.* And ſince Repentance conſiſts in a Change of Mind, in rectifying what

what was before amiſs, and in fulfilling that Obedience which was before wanting; it is evident, that to repent of the Violation of any Law, is to return to the Obedience of it: and he that exhorts and calls you to Repentance, calls you back to the Obedience of that Law, againſt which you had offended. The Queſtion then is, againſt what Law thoſe Offences were committed, the Repentance for which was ſo neceſſary, that without it there was no Admittance into the Fellowſhip of the Goſpel of Chriſt. The Laws of the Goſpel, conſidered as ſuch, are evidently excluded upon the preſent View; for Repentance being the firſt Thing every where taught, and antecedently to the Publication of any of the Rules and Precepts of the Goſpel, the Law not yet publiſhed could not be the Rule of that Repentance, which related to Sins already committed. At the Time of the Publication of the Goſpel, there were many Forms and Inſtitutions of Religion ſubſiſting in the World: but as theſe were very different from one another, inſomuch that if ſome were true, others were certainly falſe; ſo they could not be the Ground of that Repentance, which being generally taught to

all the World, to the *Gentile* as well as the *Jew*, muſt reſpect ſome general Law, which related alike to all, and the Obligations to which were in ſome Degree univerſally felt and acknowledged: and this can be no other than that which the Apoſtle to the *Romans* has deſcribed in Chap. ii. 14, 15. *When the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by Nature the Things contained in the Law, theſe having not the Law, are a Law unto themſelves: which ſhew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conſcience alſo bearing Witneſs, and their Thoughts the mean while accuſing or elſe excuſing one another.* However the Light of Reaſon and Nature was darkened and obſcured by the Ignorance and Superſtition of the World, yet ſome Remains of it were in all Places to be found; and the general Principles of Religion were ſo rivetted in human Nature, that ſhe could not but ſtart at any Thing that directly contradicted them: thus, for Inſtance, in the great Branch of natural Religion, which relates to the Worſhip and Service of God, though Mankind had univerſally erred and defiled themſelves with many Pollutions and Abominations, yet Atheiſm was as deteſted a

Crime

Crime in the Heathen World, as it is in the Chriſtian; and ſome, we know, were thought worthy of Death, for being the Maintainers of ſo unnatural an Opinion. A Senſe of the moral Duties between Man and Man was better preſerved; and there are not many Vices condemned in the Goſpel, which were not infamous before in all the civilized Parts of the World. This general Law, as the Apoſtle tells us, was the Ground-work of Conſcience, the Teſtimony of the Conſcience plainly ſhewing the Work of the Law to be written in the Heart; and this is a further Evidence, that this Law of Nature was the Foundation of that Repentance, which was to uſher in the Goſpel: for as the preaching of Repentance neceſſarily refers himſelf to the Conſciences of Men, to point out to them the Guilt of their Actions; ſo muſt his Doctrine neceſſarily relate to that Law, which is the Principle or Origin of Conſcience. Since then the Doctrine of Repentance, with which the Goſpel ſet out in the World, had Reference to the Law of Reaſon and Nature, againſt which Men had every where offended; and ſince Repentance infers the Neceſſity of a future Reformation, and a Return to that

Duty

Duty and Obedience from which by Tranſgreſſion we are fallen; the Conſequence is manifeſtly this, that the Goſpel was a Republication of the Law of Nature, and its Precepts declarative of that original Religion, which was as old as the Creation.

That this muſt certainly be the Caſe, will appear, by conſidering the Nature of the Thing in itſelf. The Notions of Good and Evil are eternally and unalterably the ſame; which Notions are the Rules and Meaſures of all moral Actions, and are conſequently neceſſary and conſtituent Parts of Religion: and therefore if the Religion of Nature, in her primitive State, was pure and uncorrupt (which will not, I preſume, be denied), though there was ſufficient Reaſon for a Republication of it, becauſe of the great Ignorance and Superſtition which had grown upon the World, yet there could be no Reaſon for any Alteration of it; for though the World was the worſe for abaſing the Religion of Nature, and might want to be reformed by a divine Inſtructor, yet the Religion of Nature was not the worſe for being abuſed, but ſtill retained its firſt Purity and Simplicity. The Duties of Religion, conſidered as a Rule of Action, flow from

from the Relation we bear to God, and to one another; and Religion muſt ever be the ſame, as long as theſe Relations continue unaltered. If our firſt Parent was the Creature of God, ſo are we; and whatever Service and Duty he owed, in Virtue of this Dependance, the ſame is due from us; nor can this Relation be ever made the Ground of different Duties in his Caſe, and in ours: if therefore Nature rightly inſtructed him at firſt how to ſerve his Maker, our Obligations being the ſame with his, our Rule muſt be the ſame alſo. The Caſe is the ſame with Reſpect to the Duties owing from Man to Man; and it would be as reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the three Angles of a Triangle ſhould be equal to two right ones in one Age, and unequal in another, as to ſuppoſe that the Duties of Religion ſhould differ in one Age from what they were in another, the Habitudes and Relations from which they flow continuing always the ſame.

That the Caſe is in Fact what I have repreſented it to be, might be ſhewn from the particular Laws of the Goſpel, and their Dependance, from the Maxims and Principles of natural Religion: but this would be rather

rather the Work of a Volume than a Sermon; I will content myſelf therefore with one general Proof, which reaches to every Part of the Chriſtian Doctrine, and yet will not lead me beyond the Bounds to which I am confined. Our Saviour in the 5th of St. *Matthew* tells us, *that he came not to deſtroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them.* What his Meaning was, he ſufficiently explained in the following Part of his Sermon on the Mount: in which, laying down firſt the old Law, he ſhewed in every Inſtance wherein the true Perfection of that Virtue conſiſted which the Law required. The Law forbad Murder and Adultery; our Lord declares, that not only the immoral Actions, known by thoſe Names, were reſtrained, but even the internal Corruptions of Heart from which they flowed; and extends the Prohibition to Hatred and to Luſt, one the Parent of Murder, the other of Adultery. Since then our Lord ſo fully declares that his Purpoſe was to perfect and complete the Law and the Prophets, it remains to be conſidered, what Notion he had of the Law and of the Prophets: in the 22d of St. *Matthew*, the Queſtion was put to him by a Lawyer;

Which

Which is the great Commandment in the Law? Our Saviour anſwers, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart*, &c. *This is the firſt and great Commandment*; and the ſecond is like unto it, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf.* Having laid down theſe two great Rules, he thus declares his Senſe with reſpect to the Subject of our preſent Enquiry; *On theſe Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.* If the Law and the Prophets hang on theſe two Commandments, then the Doctrine of our Saviour, which is the Perfection of the Law and the Prophets, muſt hang on them likewiſe. Now if you will allow that the Love of God, and the Love of your Neighbour, are fundamental in the Law of Reaſon and Nature (as undoubtedly they are), you muſt alſo allow, that whatever may be deduced from them, by rational Conſequence, muſt be a Precept of the Law of Nature: whatever therefore hangs on theſe two Commandments, muſt neceſſarily be a Part of Natural Religion; and that all the Law and the Prophets do ſo hang, and conſequently the Doctrine of the Goſpel, which is the Perfection of them, you have had our Saviour's expreſs Teſtimony.

mony. Since then it appears (as I think) that the Religion of the Goſpel is the true original Religion of Reaſon and Nature;

The ſecond Thing I ſhall obſerve to you is, that it has, as ſuch, a Claim to be received independent of thoſe Miracles which were wrought for its Confirmation.

This Conſequence will be admitted by all, who allow the Force and Obligation of natural Religion, and can be denied by none, who know or underſtand themſelves. The Principles of Religion are interwoven in the very Frame and Make of our Minds; and we may as well run from ourſelves, as from the Senſe of the Obligations we are under. If the Law which is in our Members ſhould get the better of the Law of our Minds, and lead us into the forbidden Paths of Vice and Immorality; though Obedience cannot hold us, yet Guilt will never forſake us; and our own Conſciences will not permit us to forget the Law, however our corrupt Paſſions may induce us to tranſgreſs it. This Senſe will always keep a Paſſage open to the Heart, for Inſtruction to enter in; and there needs nothing more to ſhew, that Man is obliged to ſubmit to the Rules and Laws of Reaſon, than to ſhew that he is a rational

rational Creature; ſince if Reaſon be of any Uſe, it is for our Direction; and to ſuppoſe a Creature to have Reaſon to direct him, and yet that he ought not to be directed by it, is a Contradiction: ſo far therefore as the Goſpel repreſents to us the Law of Nature, it needs only to appeal to the Reaſon of Mankind for its Authority, and may leave its Cauſe to be tried in every Man's own Breaſt before the Tribunal of Conſcience: and how far this is the Caſe of the Goſpel, has been already ſhewn at large.

But ſome one perhaps may have a Mind to aſk, why he may not teach the Heathen the Religion of the Goſpel, as well in his own Name, as in the Name of Chriſt; ſince, being the very Religion of Reaſon, it wants no Name to ſupport it? To which I anſwer: that if the Heathen are ſuch Maſters of Reaſon, as to want no teaching, the Queſtion is impertinent; and if they do want inſtructing, there is no Compariſon between the Maſters.

But the Truth is, that all the Eſſentials of true Religion are contained in that Part of the Goſpel, of which ſo much has been already ſpoken: but how this Religion came to ſtand in need of being renewed by a ſpecial

cial Commiſſion from Heaven, how Nature came to want that new Light which the Goſpel has given, and thoſe additional Helps and Aſſiſtances from the Influence of the Spirit of God, which the Goſpel has promiſed, is a Matter of another Conſideration, and opens to us a new View, to ſee the Reaſonableneſs and Neceſſity of the Doctrines peculiar to Chriſtianity, which, though not different, are yet diſtinct from the Principles of Reaſon and Nature.

Had Man continued in the Purity of his firſt Religion, he had wanted no ſecond; the Doctrine of Nature had led him to the Enjoyment of the glorious Hopes, to which he was born, of Life and Immortality. But when he fell under the Power and Dominion of Sin, he grew both blind and impotent, had but little Knowledge left to find his Duty, and ſtill leſs his Ability to perform it. The Hiſtory of the Fall is preſerved to us in ſacred Writ; but let the Scripture be ſilent, and let Experience only ſpeak. Look back into the paſt Ages of the World, as far as the Clue of Hiſtory can guide you, and tell me in what Place the Purity of natural Religion was preſerved: obſerve the Manners of Men, and their religious Ser-

vices,

vices, and when you are tired with the ſad Proſpect of the Ignorance and Barbarity of ſome, the Superſtition and Idolatry of all, tell me once more, did the World want an Inſtructor or no? If it did, we have little Reaſon to complain that it had one, ſtill leſs to ſtumble at the Dignity of the Perſon who undertook the deſperate Cauſe of Nature; or to reject his Authority, becauſe he is greater than we know how to conceive, even the only begotten Son of God.

He came into the World, not merely to reſtore the Religion of Nature, but to adapt it to the State and Condition of Man, and to ſupply the Defects, not of Religion, which continued in its firſt Purity and Perfection, but of Nature, which was fallen from the original Dignity of the Creation. Man was born the Heir of Glory and Immortality; but our Saviour found him under the Power of Sin and of Death. If Death came in as the Penalty of Diſobedience to the Law of Nature, as we learn from the ſure Word of Prophecy that it did, it was an Evil, for which natural Religion could afford no Remedy; for no Law provides a Remedy againſt its own Penalties; which would be to weaken and deſtroy the Obligations to

Obedience, which the Penalty was intended to enforce. And though the World every where retained ſome Notion or other of a future State, and was fond of cheriſhing the languiſhing Hopes of Immortality; yet theſe Hopes ſeem rather to be the Remains of that firſt State, in which Nature had the full Proſpect of Life before her, and which ſubſiſted when the Bleſſing itſelf was forfeited, than any juſt Aſſurance of another Life after Death, to be purchaſed by Virtue and Obedience. To repair this Breach, and to ſettle Religion once more, upon the ſure Foundation of the Hopes and Fears of Eternity, our bleſſed Lord *brought Life and Immortality to light again* by the Goſpel; and publiſhed to the World the new Doctrine of a Reſurrection from the Grave, of the Truth of which Doctrine we had the firſt Inſtance, and the fulleſt Confirmation, in his own victorious Triumph over the Powers of Death and of Darkneſs. Hence it is that we are ſaid to be begotten again through Chriſt Jeſus unto a lively Hope, or unto the Hope of Life: hence alſo we are told, that *God hath* now *appointed a Day, in which he will judge the World by the Man Chriſt Jeſus.* Hence it is, that theſe two, or rather this one

one Article relating to a Reſurrection and a Judgment to come, was the main Thing which the Apoſtles had in Commiſſion to publiſh to the World; inſomuch that when a new Apoſtle was to be choſen in the Room of *Judas*, it was required, as a neceſſary Article, that he ſhould be qualified to be a competent Witneſs of the Reſurrection of Chriſt, in which the Authority of this great Article was founded.

But to what Purpoſe was it to reſtore Religion from the Corruptions of Ignorance and Superſtition; to what End was this *better Hope* brought in? Since our firſt Parents, who wanted not this Hope, nor this Knowledge, yet wretchedly fell from both by Tranſgreſſion, what Security can we, their Sons, ſtill worſe than they, promiſe ourſelves from theſe Advantages? It is we that are weak and degenerate, it is we that moſt of all want to be reſtored: this original Corruption made it neceſſary, in order to ſave the World, not only to reſtore Religion, but Nature herſelf. Hence it is that our Admiſſion into the Goſpel is attended with a new Birth unto Righteouſneſs; hence it is that we are put under the Conduct and Direction of the Holy Spirit, who is our

Fellow-Labourer in the Goſpel, and in all Times, and in all Places, ready to comfort and ſupport the Faithful. If, to ſtrengthen our Confidence in him, we are told that he is in all Reſpects equal to the extenſive Charge; that being the Eternal Spirit of God, he can in all Places and at all Times diſcharge the Office; this Knowledge, which was communicated to make our Faith and Hope conſiſtent, and to ſet both upon a reaſonable Foundation, ought to be no Objection againſt either. And ſince theſe Articles of our Creed, being beyond the Diſcovery of human Reaſon, are placed upon the ſurer Foundation of the Demonſtration of the Spirit, in mighty Signs and Wonders, they ought to be no Stumbling-block to us; for the Reaſon may teach us to embrace the Remedy, which ſhe could not provide.

It is true, the Goſpel has taught us Things, which by Nature we could not know; but they are all deſigned to confirm and ſtrengthen our Hope in God: it is true alſo, that there are ſome Inſtitutions in the Goſpel, which in their own Nature are no conſtituent Parts of Religion; but they are ſuch only as are neceſſary to enable us to do

our

our Duty, by conveying to us new Supplies of ſpiritual Strength. Theſe are the Additions which the Goſpel has made to natural Religion; forgive its Injury. Our bleſſed Saviour ſaw that the Hopes of Nature were loſt, therefore he brought to Light again Life and Immortality: he ſaw that we were corrupted, not able to reſiſt Evil, and therefore he ſupplied the Defect by the Aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit; pardon his Care, and do not think the worſe of him, or his Religion, for the great Proviſion he has made in it for your Security.

Theſe Conſiderations may perhaps ſuggeſt to your Thoughts what probable Ground there is to hope for Succeſs in our Endeavours to ſpread the Goſpel of Chriſt in the dark Corners of the World; and what is the true Method of propoſing it to the uninſtructed Part of Mankind. But as I chooſe to decline this Subject, and to leave it to the properer Hands on which it is placed, I ſhall ſhut up all with this Petition: that God would haſten the Completion of the Prophecies relating to the Kingdom of Chriſt; that he would give him the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the utmoſt Parts of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion, that he may be his Salvation to all People.

DISCOURSE VII.

PSALM CXXII. 6.

Pray for the Peace of Jeruſalem: they ſhall proſper that love thee.

THERE is nothing places Religion in a more diſadvantageous View, than the Opinion entertained by ſome, that a Concern for the preſent Peace and Proſperity of the World is ſo foreign to all the Ends and Purpoſes of true Religion, that a good Man ought not to ſuffer his Thoughts, much leſs his Paſſions and Affections, to be engaged in ſo worthleſs a Subject.

The inſpired Writers have indeed, with repeated Inſtructions, guarded us againſt the Temptations of Riches, Honours, and Pleaſures, and prepared us to undergo the Calamities and Afflictions of Life, with

Firmneſs and Conſtancy of Mind. But what then? So does the General exhort his Soldiers to bear with Patience the Fatigues of War, to deſpiſe the Dangers of it, and in the Day of Action to preſs forward, regardleſs of Life itſelf; yet ſtill Victory and Triumph, and the ſweet Enjoyments of Peace, are the End of War; and the Soldier, though he muſt not fear to die, yet it is his Buſineſs to live and conquer. Religion is a ſpiritual Warfare, and the World is the Scene of Action, in which every good Man will be ſure to meet with Enemies enough; and it is not the End he aims at, but the Oppoſition he meets with, in purſuing that End, that makes it neceſſary for him to be inured to bear the Miſeries and Afflictions of the World. Were the Caſe otherwiſe, it would be Iniquity to pray for temporal Peace and Proſperity; ſince we never ought to ſeek that by Prayer to God, which the Rules of our Religion will not permit us to be concerned for. So that the Exhortation in the Text, to *pray for the Peace of Jeruſalem*, implies that we ought to be concerned for her Peace, ſo concerned as to do whatever is in our Power to procure, and to preſerve it; ſince Prayer to God

God for his Aſſiſtance, ſuppoſes the Uſe of our own Endeavours to obtain the Bleſſing we contend for: and that we may not think, that the Chriſtian Religion has made any Alteration in this Caſe, St. *Paul* has exhorted us to pray, and to give Thanks for all Men; eſpecially for Kings, and all that are in Authority; for this Reaſon, *That we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.*

Upon this View then a Concern for the Peace and Proſperity of our Country is not only a political but a religious Virtue; a Care that becomes us, both as we are Men, and as we are Chriſtians; which ſtands not upon the narrow Bottom of Self-Intereſt, but riſes from a more generous Principle, partaking of the Love of God, and of our Neighbour; ſince whilſt we ſeek the public Peace, we ſhew our Beneficence to one, and our Obedience to the other.

But there is a farther Conſideration, which makes the public Peace to be the juſt Concern of every good Man. The preſent State of Religion in the World is ſuch, and ſo connected every where with the civil Rights of Mankind, that there is no probable Ground to hope, that even the Religion we profeſs

profeſs can be ſaved out of the Ruins of the Liberty of our Country. If therefore it be a Care worthy of a good Man, to preſerve the Purity of Religion in his own Time, or to tranſmit it ſafe to Poſterity; if we may wiſh, as well as pray, that he may *lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godlineſs and Honeſty*; or that his Sons and his Daughters may ſtand up after him before the Lord in the Congregation of his Saints: if theſe be lawful Deſires, and ſuch as we may by our beſt Endeavours labour to obtain, our Religion will never permit us to be unconcerned Spectators in any Cauſe that affects the Proſperity of our Country; upon which, under God, depends the Liberty we enjoy of freely profeſſing the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

The *Pſalm* from which the Text is taken, turns wholly upon theſe two Topics; the temporal Proſperity of *Jeruſalem*, conſidered as the Head of the civil Government, in the flouriſhing Condition of which the Happineſs of the whole Nation was concerned; and conſidered as the Seat of true Religion, the City in which God had choſe to dwell, and to place his Name there; upon whoſe Peace conſequently depended the Security of the

the holy Religion, which was there taught and profeſſed. The firſt Thing that gave Vent to the holy *Pſalmiſt*'s Joy, was obſerving the Unanimity of the People in their Attendance upon the Service of God in the holy City; *I was glad when they ſaid unto me, Let us go into the Houſe of the Lord: our Feet ſhall ſtand within thy Gates, O Jeruſalem.* From hence, he entertains himſelf with the beautiful Proſpect of *Jeruſalem*, as it was the Center both of religious and civil Government, in which were ſeated the Ark of God, and the Throne of *David*: from whence iſſued the Streams of Juſtice and Holineſs, to refreſh and make glad all the Cities of *Iſrael*. *Jeruſalem is built as a City, that is compact together*; or, as the old Tranſlation reads, *that is at Unity in itſelf. Whither the Tribes go up, the Tribes of the Lord, unto the Teſtimony of Iſrael, to give Thanks unto the Name of the Lord. There are ſet Thrones of Judgment, the Thrones of the Houſe of David.* The Contemplation of this happy State of his Country, naturally vented itſelf in the Warmth and Ardor expreſſed in the Text, and following Verſe: *Pray for the Peace of Jeruſalem:*

lem: they ſhall proſper that love thee. Peace be within thy Walls, and Proſperity within thy Palaces. This affectionate Prayer and Exhortation was founded in a Concern for the temporal Happineſs of his Country and Nation; and therefore he adds, *For my Brethren and Companions Sakes, I will now ſay, Peace be within thee*; and in a juſt Regard for the Honour of God and his Religion, therefore, he cloſes all with this Reflection: *Becauſe of the Houſe of the Lord our God, I will ſeek thy Good.*

You ſee the Extent of the Duty recommended in the Text, and the Reaſons in which it is founded: and ſince we have ſo great an Authority to juſtify our Care and Concern for the public Peace and Happineſs of our Country, both in Regard to our civil Rights, and to the Intereſt of that holy Religion which we profeſs, I beg Leave to bring the Arguments home to ourſelves, and to the Occaſion of this Day, by obſerving to you,

I. What Reaſon we have on both theſe Accounts to bleſs God for our Deliverance from the late Rebellion: and,

II. What Obligations we are under from the

the ſame Motives, to uſe our own beſt Endeavours, to make perpetual the Bleſſing of this Deliverance.

Some Arguments there are, which require rather a Capacity of Feeling, than any great Acuteneſs of Judgment, to apprehend them: ſuch are they which are drawn from the Experience of Senſe, from Pleaſure or Pain, from the Conveniences or Inconveniences of Life; of which no Man is a capable Judge, who wants the Senſe proper to diſtinguiſh between the Pleaſure and the Pain, or the Experience of the Convenience or Inconvenience under Debate. One would think, that an ordinary Imagination would ſerve to repreſent the Difference of Liberty and Slavery; of the State, in which every Man may ſit under his own Vine, and eat his Bread with Cheerfulneſs; and that Condition, in which nothing is to be called our own, but the Miſery of ſubmitting to deſpotic Power: and yet we find, that the Generality of Men are not Maſters of ſo much Reflection as is neceſſary to arrive at this ſmall Degree of Knowledge in the Affairs of the World. It is the Obſervation of *Tacitus*, the *Roman* Hiſtorian, one allowed to be a good Judge of Mankind, that the People

People of *Rome* were prepared for Slavery by the long Reign of *Auguſtus*, which had almoſt worn out the Race of Men that had taſted the Sweets of Liberty and Freedom. Ours ſeems to be the Reverſe of their Caſe: we have ſo long enjoyed the Protection of our Laws, and are got at ſuch a Diſtance from the late Times of Diſtreſs, that we have not Memory enough of them left to awaken our Care to prevent their Return. Our Fathers, who lived under the Dread of Popery and arbitrary Power, are moſt of them gone off the Stage, and have carried away with them the Experience, which we their Sons ſtand in Need of, to make us in earneſt to preſerve the Bleſſing of Liberty and pure Religion, which they have bequeathed us. O that I had Words to repreſent to the preſent Generation, the Miſeries which their Fathers underwent; that I could deſcribe their Fears and Anxieties, their reſtleſs Nights and their uneaſy Days, when every Morning threatened to uſher in the laſt Day of *England*'s Liberty, when Men ſtood mute for Want of Counſel, and every Eye was watching with Impatience for the happy Gale that ſhould ſave the Kingdom; whoſe Fortunes were reduced ſo

low

low as to depend upon the Chance of Wind and Weather.

Had Men ſuch a Senſe of the Miſeries of the Time paſt, it would teach them what Conſequences they were to expect from any ſucceſsful Attempt againſt the preſent Eſtabliſhment. They would not want to be inſtructed, what a free Nation had to fear under the Government of one, educated in Sight of all the Arts of Tyranny and Oppreſſion; or what Uſage a Proteſtant Church would find, under the Influence of a Prince trained up from his Cradle in the Superſtition and Corruption of the Church of *Rome*. Were the Influence of Religion confined within the narrow Compaſs of every Man's own Breaſt, the Subject, perhaps, would have but little Reaſon to be inquiſitive about the Prince's Perſuaſion; but ſince it is Part of every Man's Religion to propagate the Doctrine he profeſſes; and ſince the Methods of Propagation in the Hands of a Prince, which are ſtrengthened by the Power of the temporal Sword, are not likely to be confined to the gentle Meaſures of Reaſon and Inſtruction; the Religion of the Prince muſt be conſidered as a Condition requiſite to the Happineſs and Proſperity of the People.

ple. In our own Caſe this Conſideration is the more neceſſary, becauſe it is the avowed Principle of the Church of *Rome*, not only to wiſh for the Converſion of thoſe who diſſent from her, but to force it by all the Terrors of worldly Power. And a Nation muſt want common Senſe, to put the Sword of Government into his Hands, who they know will be bound in Conſcience to uſe it, either to the Deſtruction of their Souls or their Bodies. There is no one doubts, but that there are natural Incapacities ſufficient to exclude one, otherwiſe entitled to Government. An outrageous Madman nobody would truſt, becauſe nothing is to be expected from him but Havock and Deſtruction. Now if a moral Defect will produce the ſame evil Conſequences, why ſhould not the moral Incapacity be eſteemed as ſtrong a Bar as the natural? It matters not whether it is Conſcience or Madneſs which cauſes the Deſtruction, a Nation ſurely has a Right to prevent ſuch a Violence, without being troubled to know, whether the Diſtemper, from which it grows, has its Root in the Head, or in the Heart. The *Romaniſts* have little Reaſon to complain of this Inſtance of our Care for our own Security,

rity, ſince it is the Doctrine of their Church, taught by Councils, confirmed by Popes, and defended by their ableſt Schoolmen and Divines, that Heretics have no Right to Dominion; that they may be depoſed by the Pope, and their Subjects abſolved from all Bonds of Allegiance to them. And their Practice has been of a Piece with their Doctrine: *Henry* the Third of *France* was excommunicated for a leſs Crime, for favouring only the Succeſſion of a Proteſtant Prince; and thus excommunicated, was murdered by a poor Monk. *Henry* the Fourth was ſo ſtrongly oppoſed by the League, animated by the Pope, that he could never fix himſelf in the Throne till he changed his Religion. If we come to our own Country, Queen *Elizabeth* was formally depoſed by a Bull from *Rome*; and her Subjects abſolved from their Obedience to her: nay, thrice was ſhe depoſed by three Popes, to ſhew how conſtant they were to this Point. When King *James* the Firſt came to the Crown, his firſt Compliment from *Rome*, was by a Mandate of *Clement* the Eighth, declaring him incapable of holding the Crown, becauſe he was an Heretick; that is, becauſe he was a Proteſtant;

and therefore enjoining his Subjects to yield him no Duty or Obedience. But notwithſtanding this Doctrine, ſo well confirmed by Authority and Practice, yet conſidering the preſent State of *Britain*, and the Views of *Rome*, I ſhould not be ſurpriſed to hear her Emiſſaries maintaining, with all Solemnity, the contrary Opinion. When a Proteſtant Prince was to be depoſed by *Roman Catholics*, it was proper Encouragement to tell them, that Hereſy was a Forfeiture of Dominion; but now, that they want the Aſſiſtance of the Proteſtants of *England* to advance a Popiſh Prince to the Throne, we may certainly expect to hear from them, that Religion is out of the Queſtion when the Claims and Titles of Princes are under Debate; and perhaps too we may be ready enough to believe them; ſo much *wiſer are the Children of this World in their Generation, than the Children of Light.*

The Principles upon which the Legality of the preſent Eſtabliſhment are maintained, are I think but improperly made a Part of the preſent Quarrel which divides the Nation. There are but few who have not precluded themſelves on this Point: thoſe I mean who have had Courage and Plainneſs enough

enough to own their Senſe, and to forego the Advantages, either of Birth or Education, rather than give a falſe Security to the Government, which under their preſent Perſuaſion they could not make good. To theſe I have nothing more to ſay, than to wiſh them what I think they well deſerve, a better Cauſe: but to us, who had bound ourſelves by previous Oaths and Obligations in the moſt ſolemn Manner in the World, the Acceſſion of his Majeſty could adminiſter no Occaſion of reconſidering this Queſtion: there was nothing new required of us; we had no Faith to give, which was not already plighted, and bound upon our Souls by the moſt ſacred Engagements. Thoſe therefore under theſe Circumſtances, who have openly engaged, or ſecretly favoured the Rebellion, are void of all Excuſe; they are guilty of the greateſt Crime under the greateſt Aggravation; and ſeem to have no Refuge left, but that which was *Adam*'s Policy, *who hid himſelf from the Preſence of the Lord God amongſt the Trees of the Garden*, becauſe he had nothing to cover his Nakedneſs.

Should any ſuch, quitting all Pretences of Diſſatisfaction with the Lawfulneſs of the

preſent Government, plead Diſobligations or Reſentments of any Sort, as the Ground of their Proceedings, to them we anſwer in the Words of our bleſſed Saviour, *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of.* Where did they learn, that Rebellion is the proper Remedy in ſuch Caſes? The Church of *England* has no ſuch Doctrine; and if they cannot govern their own Paſſions, yet, in Juſtice to her, they ought not to uſe her Name in a Cauſe which ſhe ever has, and will diſclaim.

It is perhaps too high a Degree of Virtue to expect in this Age, that Men ſhould act with a ſteady View to the public Good, without being drawn at all by the Bias of their own Intereſt. Whoever builds upon a Dependence on ſuch a Behaviour from any Set of Men, will, I believe, find himſelf miſtaken. Allow then what cannot be avoided, that Men will differ in their Views and private Intereſts, yet ſtill methinks there is one common Concern, which is the Preſervation of the whole, in the Security of which every Man's private Fortune is founded; and it is as abſurd for a Man under any Reſentment whatever to enter into Meaſures deſtructive of his Country's Peace, as it would

would be for him to burn the Title to his Eſtate, becauſe the Tenant was behind in his Rent.

If therefore we have any Concern for the Peace and Happineſs of our Country, or any Zeal to preſerve the Light of the Goſpel with which theſe Kingdoms have been bleſſed; or if our Conſciences are not hardened againſt the Influence of the moſt ſolemn Oaths and Obligations, under which we have bound ourſelves to be true and faithful to our preſent Sovereign; we muſt deteſt this Rebellion, and with ſincere Hearts adore the Goodneſs of God, who hath wrought this Deliverance for us. Let us then, in the ſecond Place, conſider,

II. What Obligations we are under from the ſame Motives, to uſe our own beſt Endeavours to make perpetual the Bleſſing of this Deliverance.

This Obligation is but the neceſſary Conſequence of the Duty which we are met this Day to perform. Thankſgiving is little more than a ſolemn Piece of Mockery, if we have no Value for the Deliverance for which we would ſeem to be thankful. If any, or if all the Reaſons already mentioned, ought to excite us to pray for the Peace of our Coun-

try, or to bleſs God for reſtoring it, they muſt alſo move us to do what is in our own Power to preſerve it; ſince in vain do we pray for the Aſſiſtance of God in any Caſe, whilſt we neglect to uſe the Means of helping ourſelves, which he has put in our Power.

How much the Preſervation of the preſent Eſtabliſhment depends on the Succeſs of public Councils, every Body knows; and yet ſhould I, by any particular Application, ſeem to ſuppoſe that your Zeal in this Cauſe wanted a Spur, I might well be thought to *be the only Stranger in Iſrael, and not to have known the Things which have come to paſs in theſe Days.*

What private Men can do, they beſt know: many are certainly well qualified by their Reputation, their Station, and great Abilities, to promote the Intereſt of their King and Country; and ſurely it is every Man's Duty to do what he thinks he lawfully may do, to ſerve theſe deſirable Ends. And this would be allowed to be a very reaſonable Demand, were not the Nation unhappily divided into Factions, which have ſwallowed up all public Duty, and transferred to themſelves that Allegiance which is due

due only to the Crown. Were there but half the Zeal to ſerve the Public, which Men daily expreſs for the Intereſt of their ſeveral Parties, there would be but little Encouragement for a ſecond Attempt to diſturb our Peace.

It is wonderful to obſerve, in all Caſes, this ſteady Adherence to Party: thoſe who aſcribe it to mere Corruption, and the ſordid Ends of private Gain, ſee but little into the true Cauſe; there is another Principle more remote from common Obſervation, which has a greater Influence; a Principle in itſelf more generous, though oftentimes in its Conſequences not leſs pernicious; I mean, the Regard which Men have for their own Credit and Reputation. This is the natural Fruit of the beſt Soil; every good Man has it, and it is the Life of virtuous Actions, when its Views are rightly directed. But where Kingdoms are divided into oppoſite Factions, the true Standard of Reputation will always be loſt, and Men will grow into Eſteem, not for their virtuous Actions, but for their Party Merit. Hence it comes to paſs, that in civil Diſputes, it is as reproachful to deviate from your Leader's Opinion, as it is for a private Soldier to deſert his

General in the Day of Battle. The Obligations of the public Duty, or of private Opinion, will obtain no Quarter for you; for ſuch is your Caſe, that you may with leſs Hazard of Reproach commit almoſt any Vice, than venture to be in the right without the Support of a Majority. This Evil is the more to be lamented, becauſe its Infection ſpreads moſt eaſily among the beſt. *Helvidius Priſcus* lived in the Degeneracy of the Empire, but had all the Virtues of an old *Roman*; yet he was obſerved to be *appetentior famæ, quando etiam ſapientibus*, as the Hiſtorian remarks, *cupido gloriæ noviſſima exuitur*. But whatever may be ſaid in Excuſe for this Paſſion, in Matters which a willing Caſuiſt may perſuade himſelf to be indifferent; yet ſurely it is to be highly blamed, when the Proſperity of our King, our Country, and our Religion are at Stake: in ſuch a Time every Man ſhould run the Hazard of being true to the Public, eſpecially if he cannot deſert it without being falſe to himſelf.

There is another Evil, not much unlike the former, though of a different Kind, which is owing alſo to our unhappy Diviſions. If, on one Side, it may be ſometimes difficult

difficult for Men who have no ill Intention to the Public, to diſcharge their Duty to it; on the other, there will always be ſome to rejoice when they do Wrong; though Zeal for the Government never produces a more prepoſterous Effect, than when it makes Men take Pleaſure in the Number, or in the Perverſeneſs of its Enemies. Thoſe who are ſincerely and with any Judgment in the Intereſt of the King, have nothing more to wiſh, than to ſee the Hearts of all his Majeſty's Subjects united in Obedience and Affection to him; or, if that is not to be obtained, to ſee as many as can be. But there is a little Kind of Men, who miſtaking their party Zeal for Affection to the Government, ſeem tranſported when thoſe, whom they have been taught to think their Enemies, do by any Miſbehaviour render themſelves obnoxious to the preſent Powers: as they rejoice in ſuch Miſbehaviour, ſo are they apt ſometimes to provoke it, and think themſelves never better entitled to plead their own Merit, than when they have urged others to ſuch Things, as a wiſe Man and a Friend to the Government would with all his Care have laboured to prevent.

Under theſe unhappy Circumſtances there

is

is more Reaſon to wiſh, than there is Ground to hope, for Peace and Unanimity at Home. It is an eaſy Matter for a few deſigning Men to fill the People with great, and, at the ſame Time, very unjuſt Apprehenſions from their Governors; though his Majeſty, in his great Wiſdom and Goodneſs, took at the very Beginning the propereſt Step to prevent this Miſchief, by declaring that he would always make the Conſtitution in Church and State the Rule of his Adminiſtration. As our Conſtitution in Church has many Friends, ſo to our great Misfortune has it ſome Enemies; and as it cannot be diſſembled, but that the Fears and Jealouſies on one Side, ſo it will hardly be denied, but that the Hopes and Expectations on the other, have been very unreaſonable. And conſidering how People, in a State of Suſpicion, watch and obſerve each other, how naturally the Fears of one increaſe by ſeeing the Hopes of the other, without knowing or enquiring what Ground or Foundation there is for them; it will be neceſſary, in order to quiet the angry Spirit that is among us, to ſuppreſs *theſe Hopes*, as well as to allay *thoſe Fears*: and I pray God to redute them both to their proper Bounds, that we

may

may all be content to obey on the ſame Terms, on which his Majeſty has aſſured us he is diſpoſed to govern.

But above all, let us take Care to juſtify ourſelves in our Concern for our holy Religion, which is our beſt Plea, and ſureſt Pledge of divine Favour, by adorning in our Lives and Converſations the Doctrine which we profeſs. We have with commendable Zeal, on many Occaſions, ſtood in Defence of our Religion, at the Expence of the Blood and Treaſure of the Nation: let it not be obſerved by our Enemies, that the Religion of *England* is a mere Watch-word for an Army, never valued but when it is to be fought for; and in Times of Peace laid by, condemned to ruſt, with other the uſeleſs Arms and Inſtruments of War. Our Religion has domeſtic, as well as foreign Enemies; we have ſeen with what an uncommon Zeal it has been attacked by Infidels; profeſſing not to introduce any religious Perſuaſion, but to throw out all. Theſe Men, who deride all Religion, will be found in the End to be the beſt Agents for them who labour to bring in the worſt: and the Intereſt of our Country being ſo united to the Cauſe of Religion, ſuch profane Liberty

is deſtructive of our Security, ſince every Heart, that is alienated from a Senſe of God and Religion, carries off with it a Pair of Hands from the Defence of the Public.

To a Zeal for true Religion let us add Charity, the Crown of all Virtues; and let us ſanctify this Day of our Deliverance, by laying aſide all Hatred, Malice, and Deſire of Revenge; that we may with one Heart, and one Mind, glorify God for his Mercies, and implore his Protection for ourſelves, our King, and our Country; that he would give us the Bleſſings of Truth and Peace; that he would long preſerve our Sovereign; and that there may never want a Proteſtant Prince deſcended from him, to *go in and out before his People.*

DISCOURSE VIII.

ACTS XX. 35.

I have ſhewed you all Things, how that ſo labouring ye ought to ſupport the Weak; and to remember the Words of the Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.

THESE Words concluded the moving Speech which St. *Paul* made to the Elders of the Church of *Epheſus*, when he took his final Leave of them. The Time he had to diſcourſe with them was but little, and the Occaſion was very ſolemn; which Circumſtances would determine him to mention nothing to them, but what he judged to be of the laſt Conſequence and Concern; and what they ought always to remember, as the dying Words of their great Teacher

Teacher and Apoſtle. At the 25th Verſe, you find him under the Paſſion of a Father bidding adieu to his Children and the World; *And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, ſhall ſee my Face no more.* But to ſhew that this Care of them would outlive himſelf, he gives them his laſt Advice, the beſt, the only Legacy he had to beſtow. Two Things he eſpecially recommends to them, the Care of the Church of God, and the providing for the Neceſſities of the Poor and Helpleſs. The former Charge you have at the 28th Verſe; *Take Heed therefore unto yourſelves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you Overſeers to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own Blood.* The latter you read in the Words of the Text: *I have ſhewed you all Things, how that ſo labouring ye ought to ſupport the Weak; and to remember the Words of the Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.*

There are ſome Duties ſo eſſential to Religion, ſo neceſſary to form the Character of a good Man, much more of a good Chriſtian, that they always have been, and I hope will

will always continue to be the Preacher's common Topic. Yet this, I know, is in ſome Reſpects a Diſadvantage, and that Exhortations of this Kind are eſteemed to be ſo much Things of Courſe, that they are often uſed with more Effect by others, from whom they are leſs expected. I have need therefore to beſpeak your Favour, that I may be heard on this Subject, without incurring the Cenſure of being thought a common Beggar. And yet not to diſſemble my Intention, beg I would; partly indeed for your Sakes, whoſe Neceſſities can no otherwiſe be relieved but by Charity; but much more for your Sakes, whoſe ample Fortunes, if rightly adminiſtered, entitle you to the choiceſt Bleſſings of the Goſpel: *For it is more bleſſed to give than to receive.*

In ſpeaking of the Duty and Obligations of Charity, in this reſtrained Senſe of the Word; in which it regards only the temporal Wants and Neceſſities of our Brethren; there are three Things proper to be conſidered.

Firſt, How far the Obligations of this Duty extend; for that they do not extend equally to all, is evident, becauſe ſuch as are qualified to receive, are in all ordinary Caſes exempted from giving.

Secondly,

Secondly, Who are duly qualified to receive Charity.

Thirdly, What is the Bleſſing and Reward that attends upon the faithful Diſcharge of this Duty.

The firſt Thing to be conſidered is, how far this Duty extends; I have ſhewed you all Things, ſays the Apoſtle, *How that ſo labouring* ye ought to ſupport the Weak.. In the Verſes preceding the Text, he had ſet before them his own Example, and the Method he took to provide for himſelf, and thoſe who were with him. *I have coveted,* ſays he, *no Man's Silver or Gold or Apparel. Yea, ye yourſelves know, that theſe Hands have miniſtered unto my Neceſſities, and to them that were with me.* Now the Exhortation of the Text being founded on the Example which the Apoſtle himſelf had given, and thoſe Words, *That ſo labouring ye ought to ſupport the Weak*, neceſſarily referring to ſuch Labour as St. *Paul had undergone*, when his own Hands miniſtered to his own Neceſſities; it is evident, that the Apoſtle directed, that Part of what they could earn, even by the Labour of their Hands, ſhould be ſet aſide and dedicated to Works of Charity. The ſame Direction is repeated

repeated in his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, Chap. iv. 28. *Let him that ſtole ſteal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his Hands the Thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* Where you find Labour enjoined them, not only that they may have an honeſt Means of ſupporting themſelves, but that they might have ſomething likewiſe to ſpare in Charity to ſuch as were in Diſtreſs, and unable to work for their own Living. As the Apoſtle pleads his own Example to the Elders of the Church of *Epheſus*; ſo does he likewiſe to the *Theſſalonians*, in his 2d Epiſtle wrote to them; *Neither did we*, ſays he, *eat any Man's Bread for nought; but wrought with Labour and Travail Night and Day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you. Not becauſe we have not Power*, (*i. e.* a Right to claim a Maintenance as Miniſters of the Goſpel) *but to make ourſelves an Example for you to follow us.* Chap. iii. verſe 9.

From theſe Paſſages laid together, it is manifeſt, that the Apoſtle calls upon all indifferently, the Elders and Paſtors of the Church, as well as others, to labour, working with their Hands; and he chargers on

their Labour, not only the Duty of providing for themſelves and Families, but alſo the Care of ſupporting thoſe among them who were indigent and neceſſitous: but the Meaſures and Proportions of Charity not being Things of a determinate Nature, but ſuch as are relative to the Circumſtances and Conditions of Times and Perſons, and vary and change together with them; it muſt be abſurd to apply the Rules relating to Charity, which are to be found in the Holy Scriptures, to ourſelves and our own Times, without making a due Allowance for the Difference in our Circumſtances and theirs to whom the Rules were firſt directed. And therefore to give you a juſt ſenſe of the Meaning of the Text, and of other apoſtolical Rules concerning the Practice of Charity, it will be neceſſary to ſhew you what was the State of the Times and Perſons to which thoſe Rules have Reference.

The Church of Chriſt at the firſt preaching of the Goſpel conſiſted almoſt wholly of the Poor and Indigent, ſuch as were hardly able to ſupport and maintain themſelves by their Labour, much leſs to be liberal towards the Support of others: for this Reaſon St. *Paul* choſe rather to work for

for his Bread with his own Hands, than to make his Miniſtry burthenſome to the Churches; though at the ſame Time he aſſerts the Right he had to be ſupported by them in his Function, notwithſtanding the Narrowneſs of their own Circumſtances. The Learning and Education of the firſt Converts were no better than their Fortunes; and even the Rulers of the Church were oftentimes taken from Trades and mean Employments; the Spirit of God wonderfully ſupplying their Defects, and enabling them under all outward Diſadvantages to promote the Cauſe of the Goſpel with great Courage and Succeſs. Upon this Account the Goſpel is ſpoken of, as the peculiar Portion and Inheritance of the Poor; our Saviour gives it as a Characteriſtick of himſelf and his Miſſion, that *the Poor had the Goſpel preached to them*, Matth. xi. 25. And St. *Paul* addreſſing to the *Corinthians*, diſcovers to us the Condition of that Church; *Ye ſee your Calling, Brethren, how that not many wiſe Men after the Fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath choſen the fooliſh Things of the World, to confound the Wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak Things of the World, to confound the*

Things which are mighty; and baſe Things of the World, and Things which are deſpiſed, hath God choſen, yea, and Things which are not, to bring to nought the Things that are. 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28.

Theſe Circumſtances of the firſt Chriſtians conſidered, it is eaſy to juſtify the Propriety of the Apoſtle's Exhortation in the Text. When you reflect how Poverty reigned through the whole Body, you will not think it ſtrange that the Apoſtle ſpeaks of Labour, even to the Elders of the Church; ſince their own Labour and Work were the only Riches the Chriſtians of thoſe Days were in Poſſeſſion of; and it muſt be either Perverſeneſs or Ignorance that makes ſome argue from this, and other like Paſſages of Scripture, againſt a ſettled Maintenance for the Chriſtian Clergy; without ſeeing, that the Conſequence, if there be any Thing in it, muſt equally affect the whole Body of Chriſtians: for the Reaſon why the Governors of the Church were poor, was, becauſe the whole Church was ſo; and if the Example muſt be preſſed to oblige the preſent Times, all Men muſt part either with their Eſtates, or their Religion; otherwiſe we cannot be in the Condition of the primitive

mitive Church. It would at this Time of Day be no very proper Exhortation to call upon all Chriſtians without Diſtinction, to work with their Hands, that they might have ſomething to ſpare in Charity; but it was not only proper, but neceſſary in the Beginning, when there was no other Source of Riches in the Church, but the Work and Labour of Chriſtians. In the Text, you ſee the Elders, and with them all others, were called upon to labour, that they might be able to ſupport the Weak: and in the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, the Precept is general, *To labour, working with the Hands*, that there may be ſomething to ſpare to him that needeth. Can you imagine, that nothing is fit to be dedicated to Charity, but what is earned by bodily Labour? or that thoſe who have plentiful Fortunes and Eſtates are obliged to work with their Hands, that they may by their Labour ſupply the Wants of others, which they can better and more effectually ſupply out of their large Revenues? It may be, and certainly is, very proper for us to exhort you to part with ſomething out of your Abundance, to eaſe the Wants of the Poor, to ſpare ſomething out of the Superfluities of

Fortune, to ſupport the Neceſſitous: but it had been very improper for the Apoſtles ſo to have exhorted Chriſtians, at a Time when there were none who had either Abundance or Superfluity; all they could do was to admoniſh and perſuade thoſe who were able to labour more abundantly, that they might be in a Condition to contribute to the Relief of ſuch as were unfit for work by Age, Sickneſs, or other Infirmity. Thoſe who are able to work, who are bleſſed with Health and Strength, and Soundneſs of Limbs, are rich with reſpect to thoſe who are incapable through Want of Limbs, or by the Weight of Years, to aſſiſt themſelves; and therefore, when bodily Labour was the whole Riches of the Church, there was a Neceſſity that the Strong ſhould work to ſupport the Weak; or that the Weak ſhould periſh in their Want and Poverty. And this ſhews the Reaſon of ſuch Precepts of Charity, in which Men are moved to part with ſomething, even out of the little they can earn by the Sweat of their Brows.

This will help us likewiſe to underſtand ſome other Paſſages of Scripture relating to the Exerciſe of Charity. St. *Paul* gives the *Corinthians* timely Notice of his Intention,

to

to make a Collection among them for charitable Uſes; and exhorts them to lay by a little every Week, as they could ſpare it, that he might find them prepared to contribute when he ſhould come. Now this plainly regards their Poverty and low Circumſtances; for had they been rich, there had been no need for it; but they were not ſo wealthy as to pay Bills at Sight; and, therefore, their only way was to prepare their Sum by little and little, as their Circumſtances would give them leave to ſpare it.

In the Second Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, the Apoſtle is upon the ſame Argument, and preſſes them to be liberal with great Earneſtneſs; but that he might not ſeem to bear too hard upon their Neceſſities, he thus corrects himſelf; *I mean not that other Men be eaſed, and you burthened; but by an Equality, that now at this Time your Abundance may be a Supply for their Want*, 2 Cor. viii. 13, 14. What does this Equality mean, which he would introduce between the Givers and Receivers of Charity? Muſt we ſtrip ourſelves ſo far as to be upon a Level with the Poor, who aſk our Alms? This is a hard Saying, and, if purſued ſtrictly, would introduce great Confuſion and Diſorder into

the World. But if you conſider the Condition of the Church when the Apoſtle wrote, you will ſee how properly he addreſſes them. They might well have ſaid to him, Why muſt all the Burthen lie on us? What have we, that we do not purchaſe by irkſome Toil and Labour? To prevent which Complaint, the Apoſtle is before-hand with them in declaring, that he meant not that they ſhould be burthened, and others ſet at eaſe: had he been applying to the Rich and Wealthy, there could have been no Occaſion for this Caution, for they can give with a liberal Hand, and yet not be burthened. So likewiſe the Equality he ſpeaks of has the ſame View; he preſſes it not as in itſelf juſt or neceſſary; but in reſpect to the Time, it could not be avoided; for when there are none but Poor to relieve the Poor, it is plain how near the Equality muſt be between the Giver and the Receiver. This Equality, therefore, the Apoſtle does not lay down as a general Rule and Proportion, to be obſerved in Charity; but rather excuſes it, as the neceſſary Circumſtance of the Charity of thoſe Times.

From what has been ſaid, we may learn to give an Anſwer to the firſt Enquiry, namely,

namely, how far the Duty of Charity extends? The Apoſtle brings all under the Obligations of it, who are able to labour; but this muſt be mitigated by the Difference of Circumſtances between us and thoſe to whom the Apoſtle ſpoke. He preſſed all to labour, in order to their being charitable; the Reaſon is plain, he had none to ſpeak to but ſuch as lived by their Labour: but were he in this Place, at this Day, his Exhortation, I doubt not, would be directed eſpecially to the Rich and Wealthy, to ſuch of you as enjoy the Bleſſings of Heaven in an uncommon Degree. Thoſe who live by their Labour, are rich and proſperous in Compariſon of the poor Wretches who move miſerably on Crutches, or who want Hands to help themſelves; and they owe a Tribute to God for the Strength they enjoy of his Gift. This is plain from the Apoſtle's Rule; and if it is, if even the meaner Sort are indebted to their great Maſter, and muſt pay an Acknowledgment out of the little they receive; how much greater are your Obligations, who neither toil nor ſpin, and yet are clothed in Glory, who neither reap nor gather into Barns, and yet are fed in Plenty? This is plain. But it is harder to

ſay

ſay with Reſpect to the lower Part of Mankind, where the Obligation to this Duty begins; for although ſome who labour may be Debtors to Charity, yet all are not, becauſe all are not able to anſwer the Neceſſities of themſelves and their Families by the Profit of their Work; and ſuch can be under no Call to contribute to others. If I may have leave to deliver an Opinion in a Matter no where clearly determined, I would found it on the Advice which St. *Paul* gives to the *Corinthians*, that they ſhould lay by in Store the firſt Day of every Week, as God had proſpered them; that is, that ſome Part of what remained after a Proviſion for the preſent Occaſions of themſelves and Families, ſhould be reſerved to Charity. In this View, all who are in a ſaving Way, or who may be ſo with prudent Care, are under the Obligations of Charity; for it is but reaſonable, that we ſhould do good in Proportion as we grow rich. Between our own preſent Wants, and the preſent Wants of others, Nature will admit of no Compariſon; but when we are able to lay up for ourſelves, it is hardly conſiſtent with the Love we owe our Brother, to be ſo partial to ourſelves, as to ſuffer the Care for

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our own future Wants, to ſhut out the Conſideration of his preſent Miſery. But this Matter is left to every Man's Diſcretion, in order to prove his Love, ſince too ſtrict Rules would in great Meaſure deſtroy the Virtue of Charity, the true Value of which lies chiefly in this, that it is a Free-will Offering.

Let us then proceed to the ſecond Enquiry, namely, who are duly qualified to receive Charity.

I have ſhewed you all Things, how that ſo labouring, ye ought to ſupport the Weak. By the *Weak* here we muſt underſtand, ſuch as are not able to labour and work for their own Living; for ſince all who can labour are placed on one Side, and made Debtors to Charity, the *Weak*, who are placed on the other Side, and who have a Right to be ſupported by Charity, muſt be ſuch as are not able to work, or to provide for themſelves in any honeſt Calling or Employment. This Caſe is fully determined by the Apoſtle in his ſecond Epiſtle to the *Theſſalonians*; *When we were with you*, ſays he, *this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat; for we hear that there are ſome which walk among you diſorderly, working*

working not at all, but are Buſy-bodies: Now them that are ſuch we command, and exhort by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that with Quietneſs they work, and eat their own Bread, Chap. iii. 10, 11, 12. Here you ſee all ſuch as could work, excluded from the Benefit of Charity, and laid under a Neceſſity to labour by this Injunction; *If they will not work, neither let them eat*; that is, let them not be ſupported in their Idleneſs, but be compelled by Hunger to do their Duty, that they may, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *eat their own Bread,* and not become a Burthen upon the Charity of the Church.

The general Rule then ariſing from theſe apoſtolical Precepts, ſeems to be this: That ſuch only are due Objects of Charity, who are through Sickneſs or other Infirmity rendered incapable of Labour. And yet this Rule, if conſtrued to a rigorous Senſe, will be found inconſiſtent with Reaſon and Equity; for it may happen, that the Man who is moſt able to labour, and who does labour to the utmoſt of his Strength and Power, may be the moſt pitiable and unexceptionable Object of Charity: the Reaſon is, becauſe a Man is not in all Caſes able to earn ſo much as the Neceſſities of himſelf and

and Family require; and then he muſt either periſh, or be relieved; and his working for his Maintenance as much as he can, is ſo far from excluding him, that there cannot be a better Plea in his Behalf. Where poor Families are numerous, and conſiſt moſtly of young Children, who can bring in nothing to the common Stock, by any Thing they are capable of doing, this Caſe often happens; and the Wants of the Family exceed all that the Diligence and Induſtry of the Parents can provide.

But though we cannot ſtate the Rule of Charity ſo as to exclude all who can labour; yet it may ſeem reaſonable perhaps ſo to limit it, as that all who can work ſhould work before they are entitled to any Aſſiſtance from others. There is much more Equity in this than the other; yet even to require this, in all Caſes, would be cruel and inhuman: we know the Caſualties that all human Things are ſubject to; we have ſeen many reduced to Poverty and Want, from the moſt flouriſhing and proſperous Condition: Fire and Water, Winds and Storms, which are the ſecret Miniſters of Providence, cauſe mighty Changes in the World,

and

and often place the Richeſt upon the ſame Level with the Pooreſt; and whenever it pleaſes God to ſet ſuch Inſtances before us, the tendereſt Regard is due to their Misfortunes. When you ſee a Man fallen under ſuch Calamities, one perhaps too who has been a Father to the Needy and Friendleſs, who has relieved Hundreds in the Days of his Proſperity, would you, when the Hand of God was upon him, turn aſide from his Affliction, and ſay, Go, work for your Living? Though indeed, in a reaſonable Way of judging, they who have not been inured to labour from their Youth, but have had a liberal ingenuous Education, may be fairly reckoned in the Number of thoſe who are not able to work. The Plea of the unjuſt Steward in the Goſpel, when it was put into the Mouth of ſuch an honeſt unfortunate Man, has every Thing in it to move your Pity and Compaſſion: *I cannot dig, to beg I am aſhamed.*

Since then there can be hardly any general Rule fixed, which will be equally applicable to all Caſes, it may be worth our while to examine the Reaſon and Equity from which this Duty flows, which will ſerve

ſerve to direct us in all the various Circumſtances under which the Objects of Charity preſent themſelves.

Charity is a relative Duty, and ſuppoſes the Diſtinction of Rich and Poor, ſince, if there were no ſuch Diſtinction, there could be no Reaſon aſſigned, why any Man ſhould part with what he has to another, who is already in as eaſy a Fortune and Condition as himſelf. The Diſtinction of Rich and Poor ſuppoſes Property; for if all Things were in common, and every Man had a Right to ſerve himſelf at Diſcretion out of the Heap, one could not be richer than another, but every Man would have an equal Title to every Thing: but then how unequally ſoever the good Things of the World are divided, the Wants and Neceſſities of Nature are ſhared in common: the Poor are as ſenſible of Hunger, and Thirſt, and Cold, as the Rich are; and it cannot be ſuppoſed that God ſent Men into the World with ſuch Wants and Cravings, merely to ſtarve and periſh under them; and yet how ſhall their Wants be ſupplied, who have nothing to ſupply them with? Steal they muſt not; for that would be to invade the ſacred Law of Property, and overturn the

Order

Order which God has ſettled and appointed: it remains therefore, that they muſt obtain the Things they want from the Proprietors of the World, in exchange for ſuch Services as they are able to perform.

But is this, you will ſay, a ſufficient Source for the Maintenance of the Poor? What if thoſe who are in Poſſeſſion ſhould refuſe to accept the Service of the Poor, in exchange for their Wealth? This would be an hard Queſtion, were there not an equal Neceſſity on both Sides; had not Providence ſo ordered it, that the Rich can no more live without the Poor, than the Poor without the Rich; which being the Caſe, the Poor, who are able to aſſiſt the Rich, can never want a Means of Subſiſtence. How would a rich Man differ from a poor one, were he to ſerve himſelf in all the Neceſſities of Life? What would ſignify your large Tracts of Land, were you to plough and ſow with your own Hands? What Pleaſure or Advantage would your numerous Flocks yield, were you to ſpin the Wool yourſelves, before you could be defended from the Winter's Froſt? Since then the Rich are under a Neceſſity of being ſerved by the Poor, as much as the Poor are

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of being maintained by the Rich, it evidently follows, that the Rich have as good a Right to require Service from the Poor, as the Poor have to demand Maintenance from the Rich; and conſequently the Rich may as reaſonably withdraw their Maintenance, as the Poor withdraw their Service; which ſhews the Equity of the Rule in general, *If any Man will not work, neither let him eat*; for, in Truth, were the Poor to be maintained without working, the Rich would be in the worſe Caſe of the two; but there can be no Obligation on the Rich to exerciſe a Charity, which would deſtroy the very Diſtinction of Rich and Poor; and therefore there can be no Obligation on the Rich to maintain an idle Poverty.

It is evidently then agreeable to Reaſon and Equity, that the Poor, who have Strength and Ability for Labour, ſhould work for their Living. Let us in the next Place conſider, how the Duty of the Rich ſtands with reſpect to this Sort of Poor.

The Right which all Men have to Maintenance and Subſiſtence is a ſuperior Right to that of Property; for the great Law of Self-preſervation is antecedent to all private Laws and Poſſeſſions whatever; the Conſe-

quence of which is, that in the laſt Reſult, the Property of the Rich is ſubject to the Maintenance of the Poor. Since then the Rich cannot in Reaſon preſerve their Property longer than the Poor a Way of Maintenance; and ſince the Poor have no other Way, ordinarily ſpeaking, but their Labour; it follows, that the Rich are as much obliged to employ the Poor, as the Poor are to work for the Rich; and one is as much the neceſſary Conſequence of the Diſtinction between Rich and Poor, as the other.

As reaſonable as this may ſeem upon the general View, yet it is hard to tell every particular rich Man, what the Meaſure of his Duty is, in this Caſe; or how many Poor he ought to employ: but the Wiſdom of Providence has in great Meaſure ſuperſeded this Difficulty; for a rich Man cannot enjoy his Eſtate, cannot live anſwerably to his Fortune and Condition, without creating a great Deal of Work, for the Support and Encouragement of the Poor. The gayeſt of their Attire comes through the Hands of the Poor; and he that makes a fine Garment for you, will earn a coarſe one at leaſt for himſelf; he that ſearches the Seas and Woods to furniſh Dainties to your Table, ſupplies

ſupplies his own at the ſame Time with wholeſome, though leſs delicious Fare. Every Man therefore, who lives anſwerably to his Condition, does his Part in furniſhing the Poor with Work and Maintenance: and in this Method the Poor receive Support from the Rich in Proportion to the different Degrees of their Wealth; for if all live ſuitably to their Condition, every Man will furniſh Work to the Induſtrious, in Proportion to his Fortune.

Upon this View of the World, you may judge what real Iniquity there is in the Temper and Practice of the covetous penurious Miſer: that he denies himſelf the Comforts and Enjoyments of Life, is the leaſt Part of his Crime; for whilſt he pinches himſelf, he ſtarves the Poor; and, by living like a Beggar in the Midſt of Plenty, he withdraws from the Needy and Induſtrious that Maintenance which God has appointed for them. Human Laws have provided no Remedy for this Evil, nor indeed can they; but it may one Day perhaps be found as criminal to rob the Poor of their Work, as to rob the Rich of their Poſſeſſions. Nay, this Oppreſſion often meets with its Reward in the ſecond or

third Generation, even in this World. It is common to ſee the Miſer's Son or Grandſon ſquander the Wealth of his Anceſtor, with the utmoſt Folly and Profuſeneſs: and when we behold ſuch Inſtances, can we help thinking, that the Providence of God is uſing the Extravagance of the Son, to do juſtice to the Poor, who were injured and oppreſſed by the Penury of the Father? For whatever Miſchief Extravagancy may do to private Men and Families, yet this Good at leaſt flows from it, that the ſame Extravagance which is the Undoing of a vain rich Man, often makes Way for the Advancement of many an induſtrious poor one; or is at leaſt, for the Time it laſts, a new Fund of Work thrown into the Maintenance of the Needy.

Whenever this ordinary Method of ſupporting the Poor fails, the providing for them is a Debt lying over the Poſſeſſions of the Rich, as a neceſſary Condition of that Law which ſecures them in their Property, by making it penal for the Poor to diſpoſſeſs them by Force or Violence. And this ſhews the Reaſonableneſs of our own Law, which has ſubjected all the Eſtates and Fortunes of the Kingdom to the Maintenance of the Poor,

Poor, in Defect of other Means; which is not a new Burthen laid on private Property by the mere Strength of an arbitrary Law, but is the Voice of Reaſon and Nature, acknowledged and enforced by the Wiſdom and Power of the Legiſlature.

You ſee then how the Duties ariſing from the Diſtinction of Rich and Poor, ſtand upon the Foot of natural Reaſon and Equity.

The Goſpel, though it has left Men in Poſſeſſion of their ancient Rights, yet has it enlarged the Duties of Love and Compaſſion; and taught rich Men to conſider the Poor, not only as Servants, but as Brethren; and to look upon themſelves not only as the Maſters, but as the Patrons and Protectors of the Needy. Upon this View, the induſtrious Poor are entitled to the rich Man's Charity; ſince in the Candour of the Goſpel, we ought to aſſiſt our poor Neighbours, not only to live, but to live comfortably: and an honeſt laborious Poverty has Charms in it to draw Relief from any rich Man, who has the Heart of a Chriſtian, or even the Bowels of Nature. Mean Families, though perhaps they may ſubſiſt by their Work, yet go through much Sorrow to

earn their Bread; if they complain not, they are more worthy of Regard; their ſilent Suffering, and their contented Reſignation to Providence, entitle them to the more Compaſſion; and there is a Pleaſure not to be deſcribed in Words, which the rich Man enjoys, when he makes glad the Hearts of ſuch patient Sufferers; and, by his Liberality, makes them for a Time forget their Poverty and Diſtreſs; that even with reſpect to the preſent Enjoyments, the Words of the Text are verified; *It is more bleſſed to give, than to receive.*

But, to ſpeak of the Duty ſtrictly, Charity muſt begin where the Maintenance of the Poor fails; for whenever it becomes impoſſible for them to provide for themſelves, it becomes the Duty of others to provide for them. Now Work being the Maintenance of the Poor, it is evident, that whenever their Work fails, they become Objects of Charity: and this happens many Ways; ſometimes it happens for want of Employment; and whenever it does, it is a noble Inſtance of Charity to furniſh Work for ſuch uſeful Hands. It is a Charity which the Rich may make ſubſervient, either to their Pleaſure or their Profit; and be it either

either Profit or Pleaſure which accrues to the Rich Man, as it ariſes from Charity, it will bring a Bleſſing along with it; and look, whatſoever he doth, it ſhall proſper.

Sometimes their Want ariſes from Idleneſs, which is generally attended with great Corruption of Morals. When this is the Caſe, it is a Kindneſs, rather than a Puniſhment, to enure them to Labour by wholeſome Diſcipline: for Work being the poor Man's Maintenance, Idleneſs in him is the ſame Thing as Extravagance in the Rich; one deſtroys the Subſtance of the Poor, as effectually as the other does the Subſtance of the Rich.

That the Young, and the Old, whoſe Years render them incapable of taking Care of themſelves; that the Impotent and Lame, who have not only the Neceſſities, but the Miſeries of Life to ſtruggle with; that the diſeaſed in Body and Mind, who want either Strength or Reaſon to direct it to any uſeful Purpoſes, are all fit Objects of Chriſtian Charity and Compaſſion, is too well known to be inſiſted on. Theſe Calamities, which are incident to human Life, and are not always the Conſequences of Vice and Immorality, but come either in the Courſe of

Nature, or are ſent by the ſecret Diſpoſition of the Almighty, what are they, but the Voice of Providence, the Hand of God demanding Charity?

To direct you to the proper Methods of Charity, in regard to the ſeveral Objects deſcribed, that the Offering of an honeſt Heart may not be loſt through Miſapplication; would be an uſeful, were it a neceſſary Part of this Day's Work: but behold, theſe Objects are all before you, and the Reports now to be read of the charitable Inſtitutions of this ancient and worthy City, will ſhew you in what Hands you may ſafely truſt, whatever your Heart inclines you to offer to God for the Relief of the Miſerable.

Here the Report was read.

You have had now the State of theſe Charities ſet before you; you ſee how uſefully their Revenue is applied, and yet how ſhort it falls of the ſeveral Occaſions. It remains on my Part, that, for the Encouragement of your Liberality, I ſhould ſpeak to the laſt Thing propoſed, namely,

What is the Bleſſing and Reward attending on the faithful Diſcharge of this Duty: *It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.*

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The Time already ſpent admoniſhes me to be ſhort. In a Word then: If you compare the Conditions into which Men are divided, and the ſeveral Duties; if you conſider the Obligation the Rich are under to aſſiſt the Needy, and compare it with the much harder Obligation the Poor are under to toil for a mean Livelihood; you will have Reaſon to bleſs God, who has placed you on the happier Side, and to comply with the Duty of your Station with all Thankfulneſs to the Almighty, and to acknowledge, that he has choſen for you the better Part; and if you diſcharge the Duties proper to your Condition, you may have this Comfort added to it, it ſhall not be taken from you.

2*dly*, In regard to the preſent Pleaſure and Satisfaction attending upon Works of Charity, the Giver has in all Reſpects a better Share than the Receiver. The poor Man has a preſent Comfort in the Relief of Charity; it is Eaſe to his Suffering, and it is an Encouragement to ſee that his Poverty is not deſpiſed by his richer Neighbours, who are ſo compaſſionate, as to come to the Support and Aſſiſtance of it. But what is this to the Joy of giving Eaſe and Comfort

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to the Oppreſſed; it is a Godlike Virtue to do Good, and the Pleaſure of it has ſomething in it ſo divine, that Words cannot expreſs. To *be Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame, to be a Father to the Poor,* and a Defender of all under Oppreſſion, are Characters which bear ſome Reſemblance to the Prerogatives of the Almighty, and are the nobleſt Efforts of a rational Mind, aſpiring to be like its great Creator.

3*dly*, If we look beyond this preſent Scene, the Difference is wider. There is no Virtue in being relieved; a poor Man is not a better Man for the Charity he receives; it brings with it an Increaſe of Duty, and calls upon him for a more ſure Truſt on God, for greater Thankfulneſs to him; and ſome Obligations it lays him under, with Reſpect to his Benefactors here. And it may happen, that the Charity, which is his preſent Relief, may be a Burthen upon his future Account; and will be ſo, if he miſapplies the Gift. But the Giver has a better Proſpect before him; Charity is the Diſcharge of a Duty, and has the general Promiſes of Obedience; it is a Virtue likewiſe diſtinguiſhed from the Reſt, and has its own Reward; the Bleſſings of the Life which

is,

is, and of that which is to come: it is a Debt which God will own at the laſt Day; it is a Treaſure transferred to Heaven, and will be repaid in never failing Riches. To conclude, Charity is a double Maintenance; it gives temporal Life to the Poor, and ſpiritual Life to the Rich: it beſtows the Comforts of this World on the Receiver, and the Glories of Immortality on the Giver.

DISCOURSE IX.

MATT. xviii. 29, 30.

And his Fellow Servant fell down at his Feet, and beſought him, ſaying, Have Patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

And he would not; but went and caſt him into Priſon, till he ſhould pay the Debt.

WHEN we conſider the various Calamities and Diſtreſſes under which many Perſons and Families labour; and their utter Inability to ſupport themſelves under theſe Evils, it is ſome Alleviation to obſerve with what Diligence and Application Chriſtian Charity has been at work to find proper Methods for the Comfort and Support of ſuch as are in Miſery and Affliction.

This

This Thought ariſes naturally from the Buſineſs of this Day. And ſurely, this great and worthy City never appears more honourable in the Sight of God and Man, than when aſſembled for the Sake and on the Behalf of thoſe, who have nothing to plead for them, but their Miſery; and nothing to return, but their Prayers.

As the charitable Inſtitutions under your Direction and Government have no Uſe of Riches or Poſſeſſions but for the Supply of the Needy; the true Way of eſtimating their Condition is, to conſider the Proportion which their Revenues bear to the Neceſſities of thoſe who ſtand in Need of their Aſſiſtance. If the Poor thrive and grow able to ſupport themſelves, the Hoſpitals grow rich in Proportion; if the Poor and their Wants increaſe, the Hoſpitals themſelves grow poor, and become the Object of every Chriſtian's Charity.

From hence it is evident, that whoever, by any Methods of Oppreſſion or Cruelty, adds to the Number of the Poor and Miſerable, does as truly act in Oppoſition to theſe charitable Foundations, and the End for which they are inſtituted, as if he took from them their Poſſeſſions. For whether you

you increaſe their Burthen, or leſſen their Maintenance, it is the ſame Thing.

There are few who will ſuſpect themſelves to be chargeable with any Deſign againſt theſe Charities; and there are, I believe, few indeed, who have any formed Deſign againſt them. But if you conſider the Caſe in the View now opened to you, it may appear, perhaps, that there are many who act daily in Oppoſition to this good Work, increaſing that Burthen, which is already almoſt inſupportable.

There are many Ways which Men practiſe in oppreſſing the Poor, which might properly fall under this Conſideration; but I ſhall confine myſelf to that ſingle Inſtance, to which the Text relates, the Hardheartedneſs and Cruelty, which Men uſe towards their poor inſolvent Debtors. And I the rather chooſe to ſpeak to this Caſe, becauſe Men are apt to imagine that Conſcience has nothing to do in it, and that they are ſecure from any Guilt, ſo long as they follow in a legal Manner the Method preſcribed by the Law. Perhaps too, for a like Reaſon, this Iniquity has been leſs reproved, than it deſerves, by the Preacher; for fear he ſhould

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be thought to condemn the Law of his Country.

I have no ſuch Fear; nor do I mean to condemn the Law of my Country, or to charge it with the Cruelty of thoſe who abuſe it. If the Law itſelf is ſevere, the more Reaſon there is to be cautious in the Uſe of it: but if Men will turn the Law, which was given them for the Security of their Property, into an Inſtrument of Oppreſſion and Revenge, the Law is free, but they are guilty. And, without doubt, there have been many legal Proceedings in Courts of Juſtice, which, when they come to be re-examined in a higher Court, the Judge and the Jury ſhall be praiſed for executing the Law faithfully, and yet the Proſecutor condemned for Violence and Oppreſſion.

There is a plain Difference between the Laws made for the public Good and Safety, and thoſe introduced in Favour of private Perſons; only with Reſpect to the firſt mentioned Laws, it is often criminal to conceal Offences committed againſt them, or to compound for them with the Offenders. To conceal Treaſon is an Offence of a very high Nature; for every Man is concerned in

in the Life and Welfare of the King, and bound to defend him. To compound with Thieves and Robbers is criminal, for this plain Reaſon among others, that whoever treats with a Thief for his Impunity, treats for a greater Intereſt than he has a Right to diſpoſe of; for every Man has an Intereſt in bringing ſuch Offenders to Juſtice: and therefore no Man can remit the Penalty, but he who has a Right to act for the Public, that is, the King only.

But as to the Laws introduced for the Sake of private Rights and Properties, the Caſe is otherwiſe. For as every Man may diſpoſe of his own Rights and Properties as he thinks fit, ſo he is at Liberty to uſe the Methods which the Law has provided for the Recovery of his Rights, or not to uſe them, as he pleaſes. In all theſe Caſes therefore the Law provides the Remedy, and leaves the Uſe of it to the Conſcience of the Party concerned.

Since then Men are to be governed by the Rules of Reaſon and Conſcience, in the legal Proſecution of their own Rights; I deſire you to conſider with me, what it is that Reaſon and Conſcience and Chriſtian

Charity require of us in the Caſe now under Conſideration.

The Words of the Text are Part of one of our Saviour's Parables. They do not contain an hiſtorical Account of a Fact, ſuppoſed to have happened juſt as it is related: but here is a Caſe ſtated by our bleſſed Lord, with ſuch Circumſtances as he thought proper to ſupport the Inference to be drawn from it; and therefore the Circumſtances are to be conſidered as neceſſary Ingredients in the Judgment, which he makes upon this Caſe. Obſerve then,

Firſt, Here is a Debt ſuppoſed to be juſtly due. The poor Man owed his Fellow Servant an hundred Pence.

Secondly, When the Debt is demanded, he does not deny it, or refuſe to pay it, but deſires Forbearance only, till he could by his Labour and Induſtry raiſe enough to diſcharge the Debt.

Thirdly, He aſks even this as a Favour, and with great Submiſſion: he fell down at his Fellow Servant's Feet, and beſought him. On the contrary,

Fourthly, The Creditor comes with Inſolence and Violence to demand his Debt. *He laid*

laid Hands on his Fellow Servant, and *took him by the Throat, ſaying, Pay me that thou oweſt.* And when the poor Man beſought him to have Patience, he regarded him not, but hurried him away to Priſon; and for this Behaviour he is called, ver. 32. *Thou wicked Servant.*

Some of theſe Circumſtances ſeem to be added, to aggravate the Cruelty of this wicked Servant; ſuch are they which deſcribe the Violence uſed on one Side, and the Submiſſion and Intreaty offered on the other. And the Caſe commonly falls out to be ſo. Men are apt to demand their Debts, eſpecially from their Equals or Inferiors, with a Haughtineſs and Roughneſs hard to be borne; and yet the poor Debtor is forced by Neceſſity to take it patiently, and to be all Submiſſion.

But the Circumſtances upon which the Reaſon of the Caſe depends, are principally theſe two: *Firſt*, That the Debtor was not able to diſcharge the Debt at the Time of the Demand. *Secondly*, That he was willing to do Juſtice to his Creditor, and to endeavour, by the beſt Means he could uſe, to raiſe a Sum ſufficient to anſwer the Demand. Therefore where either of theſe Circum-

ſtances are wanting, the Reaſon of the Caſe ceaſes, and together with it all Pleas for Forbearance and Compaſſion. Conſequently every Man is at Liberty, in Point of Conſcience, to uſe the Method which the Law of his Country directs; to compel thoſe to pay their Debts, who are able, but not willing to pay them. And in Truth, where this is the Caſe, the Creditor is ſo far from being juſtly chargeable with Cruelty or Oppreſſion in making Uſe of any legal Method to recover his own, that the Charge lies ſtrongly againſt the other Side. To delay poor Traders, or others, in the Payment of what is due to them, is always Injuſtice, and ſometimes very barbarous Injuſtice. A poor Man may perhaps loſe his Credit, which is the Life of his Buſineſs, or perhaps his Liberty, which is the Life and Maintenance of himſelf and Family, for Want of that very Money which you detain from him: and when this happens, is it any Compenſation to pay the Man at laſt what is owing to him? So far from it, that ſuch a Debtor, even when his Debt is paid, may ſtand charged in Conſcience with the Ruin of a poor Family.

Another Circumſtance, upon which the

Judgment

Judgment of our Saviour in this Caſe depends, is, that there be a Readineſs and Willingneſs in the Debtor, to do Juſtice whenever he is able, and to uſe his beſt Endeavours to enable himſelf to do it. Conſequently all ſuch Debtors are out of this Caſe, who deny their juſt Debts, or any Part of them; and all ſuch as may be juſtly ſuſpected to conceal their Effects, in order to defraud their Creditors: and ſuch alſo, as live idly and profuſely, ſquandering the Eſtate which ought to be applied to do Juſtice to thoſe to whom it is due. The Reaſon of theſe Exceptions may be made plain in few Words. The preſent Inability of a Debtor is the Argument for the Delay and the Forbearance; but this Inability comes not into Queſtion where the Debt itſelf is denied. And ſince the Circumſtances of Men change ſo faſt as they do, the Man who wants Forbearance this Year, may in a few more be better able to pay the Debt, than the other is to forgive it: and what Reaſon can be given why he ſhould not? Now he who denies the Debt, declares an Intention never to pay it; which certainly will juſtify the other, in endeavouring by a legal Method to maintain and aſcertain his

Right; and till the Right is cleared, there is no Room for one Side to plead, or the other Side to conſider the Arguments for Pity and Compaſſion.

The ſecond Exception relates to a Caſe which is ſo manifeſtly fraudulent, that nothing can be ſaid in its Excuſe. They who conceal their Effects, and plead Poverty deceitfully, are mere Cheats, and deſerve no Compaſſion. To prevent ſuch Frauds, and to arm the Creditor with Power to compel a Diſcovery, ſeems to me to be the chief View and Deſign of the Law, which puts the Body of the Debtor into the Creditor's Power: and ſo odious is this Deceit, that the Law, in ſome Caſes and Circumſtances, has annexed to it a far greater Penalty.

The third Exception relates to thoſe, who oftentimes are free enough of their Promiſes to do Juſtice, and yet by their Actions declare daily, that they have nothing leſs at Heart than to do juſtly by their Creditors. Such are they who live idly and profuſely, and are conſtantly diminiſhing what they have, and by ſo doing are rendering themſelves leſs able every Day to pay their juſt Debts. Now, what Reaſon can you

you imagine, that is proper to be laid before an honeſt induſtrious Man, to perſuade him to be content that his own Family ſhould ſuffer, and his Subſtance be waſted by the Folly and Extravagance of a Stranger? Such a Man would certainly puniſh and reſtrain a Son of his own, were he idle and extravagant; and what Kind of Goodneſs or Charity is it, to maintain and ſupport the like Extravagance in another? Some wiſe Commonwealths have debarred ſuch Perſons from the Management of their own Eſtates: I am ſure there is more Reaſon to debar them from ſpending the Eſtates of other Men; and this is what every extravagant Man does, whilſt he conſumes his Subſtance, and leaves his Debts unpaid.

In theſe Caſes, therefore, and in others of the like Nature, every good Man may, and every wiſe Man will, make uſe (in a reaſonable Manner) of the Power which the Law gives him for the Security of his Property; and in ſo doing he ſtands clear of all Offence againſt Charity and good Conſcience.

But when the Circumſtances mentioned in the Text meet together; when the Debtor is chargeable with no Fault, or Fraud, but is diſabled by mere Poverty to ſatisfy

his Debts; to uſe the Extremity of the Law againſt ſuch a Man, is not only cruel and inhuman, but, as far as I can judge, contrary to the true Meaning and Deſign of the Law itſelf. For the Law which gives Power over the Body of the Debtor, is not a criminal Law, ordained for the Puniſhment of Offenders; but is a Law made to ſecure Men in their Properties, and to guard them againſt the Arts and Contrivances of ſuch as would injure them in their juſt Demands. To uſe the Law therefore, where it cannot poſſibly have any Effect towards ſecuring your Property, but can ſerve only to haraſs and torment a poor unfortunate Man, is perverting the Law, and making it ſubſervient to Purpoſes very different from thoſe, for the ſake of which it was ordained. The Law does not entruſt private Men with the Execution, or Relaxation of its Penalties for Crimes and Offences; but in the preſent Caſe, every Man may impriſon, or releaſe from Priſon, his Debtor, as he pleaſes; a plain Evidence that this Law was meant as a Defence of private Rights, and not as a Puniſhment for Criminals.

Is it then a general Rule, that the Law can never with good Conſcience be executed againſt

againſt inſolvent Debtors? There may poſſibly be Exceptions, and more than I can foreſee; but I think they muſt all be attended with this Circumſtance, that there be a Proſpect of recovering the Debt, though the Debtor himſelf be inſolvent. It may ſo happen, that he who has nothing of his own, may have wealthy Friends and Relations; and though Friends are not often willing, for the Sake of Juſtice, to pay the Debts of a Relation, yet, for the Honour of the Family, or out of perſonal Regard to the Relation, they will pay the Money as the Price of his Redemption from a Gaol. Many Caſes may be imagined, where a rich Relation ought in Reaſon to pay the Debt, rather than the poor Creditor to loſe it. In ſuch Caſes, there may be a Reaſon to juſtify or excuſe the Proceeding.

Some think that no Severity is too great to be uſed towards ſuch as have ſpent their Eſtates riotouſly, to the Injury of their Creditors. And indeed little is to be ſaid in Behalf of ſuch Perſons. Yet ſtill it is worth conſidering, whether you would chooſe to be Judge and Executioner in your own Cauſe. And if the Caſe be really ſo deſperate, that you can aim at nothing by the Execution

of

of the Law, but the Puniſhment of the Man who has wronged you, I am ſure it is the ſafer Way to leave the Puniſhment to him, who has ſaid, *Vengeance is mine, and I will repay.*

But the Caſe, which I have principally in View, ſtands clear of theſe Exceptions. The unfortunate Perſons, with whom the Gaols are crowded, are, for the moſt part, ſuch as have neither Money nor Friends to aſſiſt them; ſuch as have fallen into Poverty by Misfortunes, by a Decay in their Buſineſs, or perhaps by the Largeneſs of a Family, which their utmoſt Diligence could not ſupport. Were they at Liberty, they might probably be of Uſe to themſelves, and their poor Families, and alſo to their Creditors, by following their honeſt Callings and Employments. But now their Strength conſumes in vain, they ſtarve in Priſon, and their Children out of it, or are thrown upon the Pariſh for a miſerable Maintenance; and no Benefit or Advantage accrues, or can poſſibly accrue, to the Perſon who confines them.

Men are often urged to deal thus ſeverely with others, by the Grief and Anguiſh which attend the Diſappointment they meet with

with in their juſt Expectation; and being themſelves Sufferers, they think no Treatment too bad for thoſe to whom they impute their own Diſtreſs. But could Men conſider calmly how much Miſery they bring into the World, and how many muſt partake in the ſad Effects of their Reſentment, I am perſuaded that Humanity and Compaſſion, Virtues to which this Country never was a Stranger, would in great Meaſure prevent this Evil.

When the Father of a poor Family, who have nothing to depend on for their Subſiſtence but his Labour and Induſtry, is torn from them, what can the poor Widow and Orphans do? For a Widow *ſhe is*, and Orphans *they are*, to all the Intents and Purpoſes of Sorrow and Affliction. It is well if they take no worſe Employment than begging; oftentimes they are tempted to pilfer or ſteal, or to proſtrate themſelves for Bread; and happy is it for them, if they meet with no worſe Fortune, than to fall into your Hands to be corrected and reformed.

In the mean Time the wretched Father ſees himſelf undone, and his Family diſperſed and ruined. His Spirits ſink under Sorrow, and Deſpair eats out his Strength and Life;

Life; that ſhould you in Time relent and releaſe him, it is ten to one but the Relief comes too late. He is no longer the ſame Man; before his Impriſonment he was active and ſtrong, and had Spirit to go through his Labour; now he is broken in Mind and Body, and not able to improve to any Advantage that Liberty, which at laſt you are willing to allow him.

Would not any one, who conſiders this, be apt to imagine, that no Man lies in Priſon but for ſome great Debt; that it is impoſſible that any one ſhould uſe another thus cruelly for a Trifle? And yet, in Truth, the Caſe is quite otherwiſe: there are few, in Compariſon, who lie for great Sums; the far greater Number are confined for Trifles, for ſuch Sums as muſt be reckoned by Pence, and not by Pounds. It is true, they are commonly confined at the Suit of thoſe, who are almoſt as poor as themſelves; and the Poverty on the one Side is often urged as a Juſtification of the Severity uſed againſt the other. But alas! what Relief is it to one poor Man to undo another? What Comfort is it to torment a Wretch, whoſe Miſery can yield you no Profit or Advantage?

Whether

Whether I have juſtly repreſented the Conſequences of this Caſe, or no, you, who have the poor Orphans of this City under your Care; and you, whoſe charitable Work it is to correct and reform the Vicious and Profligate; are beſt able to ſay: for you know all the Diſtreſſes of the Poor, and the Cauſes from whence they ſpring. And, to your Honour I ſpeak it, you have provided for every Evil of Life a proper Remedy, or a proper Comfort. But I need not be your Orator; your own Deeds will ſpeak for you, far better than I can. The Report now to be read will ſhew both the Nature and the good Management of the ſeveral Charities under your Direction.

Here the Report was read.

The Account now laid before you is capable of raiſing very different Sentiments in the Heart of a Chriſtian. It is a melancholy Thing to hear the poor Orphans in one Place, the profligate Vagrants in another, the Lame and Impotent in a third, and the diſtempered in Mind in a fourth, reckoned up by hundreds and by thouſands. To what Miſeries is human Life expoſed!

But ſtill, in the Midſt of theſe Calamities, there is Reaſon to bleſs and adore the Good-

neſs

neſs of God, who has put it into the Hearts of his Servants to provide Comfort and Relief for theſe Sons and Daughters of Affliction.

The richeſt among us, when he views theſe Misfortunes, ſees nothing but what he is liable to himſelf. Examine the Condition of theſe Orphans, many of them perhaps born in the Midſt of Plenty, though now they live on Charity. There was a Time perhaps when *their* Fathers as little thought they ſhould be beholden to an Hoſpital for the Maintenance of their Children, as we may think it at this Day.

Other Calamities make no Diſtinction between Rich and Poor; we have no Inheritance in the Uſe of our Limbs and Senſes, but enjoy them by the good Pleaſure of him who gave them. And whenever theſe Misfortunes overtake us, our Riches make but little Difference in the Caſe; a rich diſtracted Man, and a poor diſtracted Man, are very near upon an Equality; and as far as the Power of Imagination goes, they often change Conditions; the poor Man fancying himſelf to be a Prince, whilſt the rich one pines and torments himſelf with the All fears and Anxieties of Poverty.

Since

Since then you are ſo nearly related to all the Miſeries now placed within your View, need I ſay much to move Tenderneſs and Compaſſion towards a Caſe already ſo much your own? This is a Cauſe which Nature will plead for in every Heart not made of Stone. But there is one ſtill greater Advocate to plead this Cauſe, even he who died for our Sins, and roſe again for our Juſtification. Theſe Orphans, theſe diſeaſed in Body or in Mind, nay, even the profligate Wretches who are brought to you for Puniſhment and Correction, are his Care; and whatever Charity you beſtow on them, he will reckon it as done to himſelf, and acknowledge it in the Sight of Men and of Angels, when he ſhall come again to judge the World in Righteouſneſs.

DISCOURSE X.

MARK iii. 24.

If a Kingdom be divided againſt itſelf, that Kingdom cannot ſtand.

THOUGH theſe Words are read in the Goſpel, yet they have not their Authority merely from thence; but for the Truth of the Obſervation contained in them, there lies an Appeal to common Senſe and Experience. Our Saviour indeed, by uſing this Maxim, has approved it; and he could not appeal to the Judgment of all Men in this Caſe, without, at the ſame Time, declaring his own.

As Obſervations of this Kind depend on a great Number of Facts; ſo are there in the preſent Caſe a great Number to ſupport

it. The many Kingdoms and Countries weakened or ruined by inteſtine Diviſions, are ſo many Proofs upon Record of the Truth of this Aſſertion. And did we of this Country want to have this Truth cleared by ſuch Inſtances, it would be but reaſonable to produce the Proofs. But we have Examples of our own Growth, and ſtand in Need of no Aſſiſtance from foreign Hiſtory. This Iſland has often changed its Inhabitants; but the new ones never got Poſſeſſion till the old ones made Way for them, by their mutual Hatred and Animoſities; and the Nation has, under very unpromiſing Circumſtances, maintained itſelf againſt foreign Enemies, whenever it was ſo happy as to preſerve Peace and Tranquillity at Home.

The late unhappy Times of *Charles* the Firſt were attended with this almoſt peculiar Felicity, that no foreign Nation was at Leiſure to take Advantage of our Diviſions. *Europe* was in Arms; and the great Powers too much in Awe of each other, for any one to conceive Hopes of Succeſs, had his Ambition inclined him to lay hold of the Opportunities, which our Diſtractions offered.

But

But though there was no Enemy to ruin us, yet ruined we were. Such is the Malignity of inteſtine Diviſion!

When national Quarrels grow extreme, and appear in Arms, it is eaſy to foreſee the ſad Conſequences; and the coldeſt Imagination may be able to paint to itſelf the Miſeries that muſt follow. And whoever looks back upon the many Years of Diſtreſs, under which this Country laboured in the late Times; let him view them with impartial, or with partial Eye; will ſee enough to convince his Judgment, how fatal a Thing it is for a Kingdom to be divided againſt itſelf. It will therefore be of little Uſe to enlarge on this Part of the Argument; and I the more willingly paſs it over, as it will ſave you and me the Pain of viewing various Scenes of Woe, which that Time, fruitful in Miſery, would preſent before us.

But there are other Evils, leſs diſcernible, which ſpring from the ſame bitter Root, and naturally prepare the Way for the greater Miſchiefs to follow after: they are the firſt Symptoms of public Confuſion; and as they influence greatly the Virtue and Morality of a Nation, they are in a more eſpecial Manner the Preacher's Care.

National Diviſions are ſometimes founded in material Differences, ſuch as affect the Well-being and Conſtitution of a Government; and ſometimes owe their Riſe to Accidents, and Trifles unworthy of the Concern of the Public. In this reſpect therefore every Caſe muſt ſtand on its own Bottom, and is ſubject to no general Obſervation. But all Diviſions, how different ſoever in their Commencement, grow in their Progreſs to be ſo much alike; partly from the common Depravity of Men, who have not Virtue enough to act honeſtly in an honeſt Cauſe; partly from the Cunning of deſigning Men, who ſeldom want the Art to direct the public Diſpute to the Service of their private Views; that there are evil Effects which may be generally aſcribed to all Diviſions, as the Fruit which they naturally produce.

1. The Zeal and Warmth which attend public Quarrels, are apt to get Poſſeſſion of Men's Minds and Affections ſo far, as to render them in great Meaſure unable to form a right Judgment of Things and Perſons.

Without a right Judgment in theſe reſpects, it is impoſſible for Men to be of any Service to their Country. For a Foundation for

for public Good can never be laid in a wrong Judgment of Things and Perſons. And yet, when Contentions run high, ſo hard is it, even for the cooleſt Heads, to form right Judgments, that it is hardly poſſible for them to get right Information in any Thing: the very Language of the Country is perverted by the Zeal of Parties; Honour and Honeſty are Words which loſe their natural Meaning, and become merely relative to the Notions of him who uſes them; and when a Perſon is repreſented to us under theſe fair and engaging Characters, nothing can be certainly concluded, but that the Man ſo highly praiſed, and his Orator, are both of a Side.

With as little Juſtice are Terms of Reproach dealt about, though commonly with a more liberal Hand, as the Reſentments of Anger and Contempt are uſually keener and more active, than thoſe of Love and Eſteem. Men of Diſcernment on all Sides ſee the Folly and Iniquity of this Practice; yet they carry on the Work, without giving Credit to themſelves, for the ſake of the Multitude, who are greatly influenced, and often prepared for Miſchief, by theſe Devices. If we look into the large Liſt of Malignants, De-

linquents, and Perſons ſuſpected, or perhaps without Suſpicion, charged as Papiſts, in the late Times, we ſhall find among them ſome of the wiſeſt and beſt of the Nation; who, could they have had the Influence in public Affairs, which their Worth and Merit entitled them to, would have ſaved both their King and their Country from Oppreſſion. But theſe Men were made uſeleſs: and in like Circumſtances the beſt Men will always be ſo; for it muſt ever be their Choice rather to ſink under ſuch Artifices, than to thrive by the Uſe of them; and the Times leave them no other Choice.

As it is with Perſons, ſo it is with Things. To ſee how obſtinately and perverſely Men approve or diſapprove almoſt every Thing by the vitiated Taſte of Party, one would think that Truth and Reaſon had left the World, or that Men were univerſally fallen blind. But neither have Truth and Reaſon left the World, nor are Men otherwiſe than wilfully blind. But when the Appeal is made, as in popular Caſes it is, to the Multitude, the Leaders find it much eaſier to direct their Paſſions, than their Underſtandings. And what Reaſon is there to expect, that Men ſhould take the Direction of their

own

own Eyes, when they refer themſelves to the Opinion and Approbation of thoſe who have none?

This blind Attachment to Things and Perſons tends gradually to deſtroy the very Notions of Right and Wrong, and to render Virtue and common Honeſty of little or no Significancy in public Affairs. The lower Part of the World ſoon grows to be inſenſible of the Difference; and by an Habit of following a falſe Rule of judging, they become incapable of making uſe of the true one. And when deſigning Men obſerve, that by doing right they cannot pleaſe their Adverſaries, by doing wrong they cannot offend their Friends, they will ſoon diſregard a Diſtinction, of ſo little Uſe either to their Intereſt or Reputation. And hence proceeds that Hardneſs of Mind, which no Reaſon, no Conviction can ſubdue.

How fatal an Influence this muſt have upon the Virtue and Morality of any People, will appear by following this Evil a few Steps further into ſome of its natural and obvious Conſequences.

2. One great Guard to Virtue, and placed in the Minds of Men by the Hand that formed them, is the Senſe of Shame when

we do ill; of the ſame Kind, and a Twin of the ſame Birth, is the Pleaſure ariſing from the Praiſe of having done well. When Men, through the Corruptneſs of their own Hearts, get rid of theſe natural Impreſſions, they are, in the Opinion of the World, profligate and abandoned. Of this Kind the Inſtances are but few. But then, to make their natural Paſſions of any Service to us, they muſt be kept true to their proper Objects, Good and Evil; and whenever the Judgment is ſo corrupted as to loſe Sight of this Difference, the Love of Praiſe and the Fear of Shame will become not merely uſeleſs, but miſchievous and deſtructive. And this muſt be the Caſe, whenever a falſe Standard of Reputation is ſet up. And when a Nation or Kingdom is divided, Honour and Reputation will be dealt out by a falſe Meaſure, and fall to their Share, who are beſt able, or moſt forward, to ſerve and promote the Meaſures of the intemperate Zeal, which poſſeſſes the one or the other Part of the Diviſion. Thus true Honour and Virtue are robbed of their natural Forces; and the Senſe of Shame and of Praiſe are ſeduced into the Service of a Faction; and ſo far perverted, as oftentimes to

prove

prove Motives to Actions baſe and diſhonourable.

3. When Praiſe and Reproaches are diſtributed with ſo little Juſtice, it has another very ill Effect in hardening Men againſt Reproach, even when they deſerve it moſt. Reproach, when it falls indiſcriminately on the beſt and the worſt, loſes its proper Effect; and bad Men will take Advantage of the ill Judgment of the World in abuſing the beſt, to deſpiſe all Cenſure, how juſtly ſoever paſſed on themſelves. This will by Degrees make Men inſenſible of the Pleaſure of doing brave and generous Actions for the good of their Country; they will grow ſteeled and obdurate in their Minds, and, with a profligate Contempt of the Opinion of the World, enter calmly and without Remorſe into any Miſchief, to which Intereſt, Revenge, or any other mean Paſſion, ſhall invite them.

4. It is a farther Aggravation of this Evil, to conſider, that this infamous Conduct ſeldom fails of being ſucceſsful. When the Malignity of inteſtine Diviſion is far ſpread, it becomes a Shelter for all Iniquity. Party Zeal uſurps the Place of Chriſtian Charity, and covers a Multitude of Sins.

And

And when once Men find that there is ſo ſhort a Way to Credit and Eſteem, they will be tempted, through Lazineſs, and a natural Depravity, which will be ever ready to lay hold on ſuch Encouragement, to decline the honourable and laborious Methods of riſing to Reputation in the World, and to truſt their Hopes and their Fortunes to the Merit of their Zeal; which Hopes ſeldom fail them. For,

5. As Credit and Reputation, the natural Rewards of Virtue, are perverted and miſapplied by the blind Spirit of Diviſion; ſo are the Rewards which the Public has provided and deſtined to the Encouragement of true Merit, diverted into a wrong Channel: the worthieſt are often driven into Obſcurity, and others called into Employments and Preferments, in which they can do themſelves no Honour, their Country no Service.

There is not a Place in Church or State of ſo mean a Conſideration, but that the Public has an Intereſt in having it ſupplied by a proper, and, in proportion to the Duty of the Office, an able Man. When this is the Caſe, the Work of Government is carried on regularly and ſteadily, and the Influences

fluences of it are duly communicated, and felt in every Part: as the Blood, which moves from the Heart, cheriſhes and warms the extreme Parts of the Body, as long as the little Veſſels which convey it are in due Order: but if theſe ſmall Channels are obſtructed, or loſe their proper Tone, Coldneſs and Numbneſs will enſue, and ſometimes greater Evils, not to be borne, nor to be cured but by the Loſs of a Limb.

Theſe are the Steps by which Diviſion corrupts the Manners and Morality of a Nation. And what Hopes are there of ſeeing a People grow great and conſiderable, who have loſt not only the Senſe of Virtue, but even the Senſe of Shame; who call Evil Good, and Good Evil; and are prepared to ſacrifice their Reaſon, their true Intereſt, the Peace and Proſperity of their Country, to their own and their Leaders Reſentments? Can it be expected that Men ſhould form themſelves by a virtuous and laborious Courſe of Life for the Service of a Country, where real Worth and Merit are ſo far out of Conſideration, that the Affections and Regards of the People are tied, like the Favour of the *Roman Circus*, to the Colour of the Coat which diſtinguiſhes their Faction.

Theſe

Theſe general Obſervations, which I have laid before you, might be juſtified by numberleſs Inſtances, drawn from the Hiſtory of the late Times; but perhaps they may weigh more ſtanding ſingle by themſelves, than being coupled with Facts, in which the Paſſions of the preſent Age are not unconcerned. And ſufficient they are of themſelves to warn all honeſt Men how they begin or foment the Diviſions of their Country.

But yet, to do Juſtice to my Subject, and the ſolemn Occaſion of this Day, it is neceſſary to take one Step into the Hiſtory of former Times, and to view the Works of Diviſion in its utmoſt Rage.

I am ſenſible how difficult it is to ſpeak of any Thing relating to that unhappy Time which this Day calls to Mind; and how hardly Truth can be borne on any Side: yet ſhall not this diſcourage me from bearing my Teſtimony againſt the unnatural and barbarous Treaſon of this Day, and the Acts of Violence which prepared the Way for it: a Treaſon long ſince condemned by the public Voice of the Nation, in the moſt ſolemn Acts of Church and State.

I ſhall go on therefore to illuſtrate my Subject by ſome Examples, which the Hiſtory

tory of the late Times affords, and which will reach to the full Extent of the Obſervation of my Text, that a *Kingdom divided againſt itſelf cannot ſtand.*

To put a Stop to Innovations, to correct the Errors or Abuſes in Government, to redreſs the Grievances of the People by the known Rules of Parliament, is the true and ancient Method of preſerving the Conſtitution, and tranſmitting it ſafe with all its Advantages to Poſterity. But when this wholeſome Phyſic came to be adminiſtered, as at length it did, by the Spirit of Faction and Diviſion, it was ſo intemperately given, that the Remedy inflamed the Diſtemper; and the unhappy Conteſt, which began about the Rights of the King, and the Liberties of the People, ended fatally in the Deſtruction of both.

The Conteſt about civil Rights was rendered exceeding hot and fierce, by having all the Diſputes and Quarrels in religious Matters, under which the Nation had long ſuffered, incorporated with it. By this Means Conſcience was called in to animate and inflame the popular Reſentments. The Effect was ſoon felt: the Church of *England*, which had long been the Glory and the

the Bulwark of the Reformation, fell the firſt Sacrifice; and many who had ſerved long and faithfully at her Altars, were driven out to ſeek their Bread in deſolate Places. What came in the Room of the Church ſo deſtroyed, Time would fail me, ſhould I pretend to recount; ſo many and ſo various were the Forms of Religion, which aroſe out of the Imaginations of Men ſet free from Government.

The Biſhops of thoſe Days were generally inclined to ſave and ſupport the Crown. The Conſequence drawn from thence was, that Epiſcopacy itſelf was an Uſurpation. My Meaning is not, that this Argument was ever uſed in the Form of Logic, to convince any Man's Judgment; but it influenced the Affections of thouſands, and prevailed ſo far as to exclude the Biſhops, not only from this Houſe, where they had ſat from the earlieſt Foundation of the Monarchy; but from their Churches alſo, where they had been received and reverenced as Rulers and Governors, for as many Ages as can be counted from the Days of the Apoſtles.

But why do I mention the Excluſion of the Biſhops from the Houſe of Lords, when ſo much more fatal a Blow was given to the

the Liberties and Conſtitution of *England*, by declaring the Houſe of Lords itſelf to be uſeleſs, and excluding the Peerage from a Share in the Legiſlature; a Right derived to them through a long Series of Anceſtors, from Time immemorial.

The Nobility were not free from the Infection of thoſe Times; and yet, to their Honour be it remembered, that the execrable Fact of this Day could not be carried into Execution ſo long as the Peerage of *England* had any Influence in the Government. But when once they were removed, and this laſt Support of the ſinking Crown taken away, the Crown, and the Head that wore it, fell a Victim to the Rage of deſperate and mercileſs Men.

It is ſaid (and the Partiality I have for the Honour of my Country makes me willingly repeat it), that few, very few in Compariſon were wicked enough, and bold enough, to dip their Hands in Royal Blood. But then, how fatal to Kingdoms is the Spirit of Faction and Diviſion, which could in the Courſe of a few Years throw all the Powers of the Kingdom into the Hands of a few deſperate Men; and enable them to trample under Foot the Crowns and the Heads

Heads of Princes, the Rights and Honours of the ancient Nobility, the Liberties and Properties of a free People, and to tear up the very Foundations of our once happy and envied Conſtitution!

Could theſe Acts of Violence, and the Cauſes which produced them, be ſuffered to lie quiet in Hiſtory, as ſo many Marks to point out to us the Rocks and Shelves on which our Fathers made Shipwreck, we their Sons might be the wiſer and the better for their Calamities. But if we permit their Paſſions and Reſentments to deſcend on us; if we keep the old Quarrels alive by mutual Reproaches and Invectives, what elſe are we doing, but nurſing up the Embers of that Fire which once conſumed theſe Kingdoms, and which may again burſt out into a deſtroying Flame? But I forbear; and will forbode no Evil to my Country.

The Application of what has been ſaid is ſo natural and obvious, that were it pardonable to omit it on this Occaſion, I ſhould hardly mention it.

There is no Pleaſure in viewing the Follies and Diſtractions of former Times; nor is there any Advantage, unleſs it is in order to grow better and wiſer by, the Example which

which Hiſtory ſets before us. In the preſent Caſe we have the Experience, which coſt the Nation dear, to warn both Rulers and Subjects, how carefully they ſhould avoid all Occaſions of Diviſion. The true Way to do it is, for each Side to maintain its own Rights, without encroaching on thoſe of the other; for the Conſtitution muſt ſuffer, whenever the Rights of the Crown, or the Liberties of the People, are invaded. And though every *Briton* is to be commended if he is fond, and may be indulged, when he is over fond (if ſuch a Caſe can be) of the Liberties of his Country; yet he ought always to remember, that as the People have their Liberties, ſo the King has his Rights, which are derived from the ſame Conſtitution, and the ſame Law, under which the People claim their Liberties: and indeed the People have an Intereſt and Inheritance in the Rights of the Crown, which are ſo many Truſts lodged in the Hands of the Prince for the Defence and Protection of the People, and to enable him the better to carry on the neceſſary Works of Government.

To conclude: As we have a Prince on the Throne, under whoſe Government,

though ſome have complained, yet none have ſuffered, in the leaſt of their Rights, by any Act of Power; who has ſhewn himſelf not only careful, but even jealous for the Liberties of his People; let us in Return yield him that Share in our Hearts and Affections, which is ſo juſtly due to him; and is a Recompence, the eaſieſt for good Subjects to pay, and yet the moſt valuable that a good Prince can receive.

DISCOURSE XI.

LUKE X. 36, 37.

Which now of theſe three thinkeſt thou was Neighbour unto him that fell among the Thieves? And he ſaid, He that ſhewed Mercy on him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Go, and do thou likewiſe.

THE Caſe of the good *Samaritan*, to which the Text has relation, was not principally intended to ſhew the Neceſſity of Works of Mercy, or to recommend them to the Practice of the World; theſe were Points in which our Lord, and the Perſon with whom he diſcourſed, had no Difference. Nor is there in the World any material Difference in Opinion upon this Point, as long as the Duty is recommended in general Propoſitions, and Application is made

to the common Sentiments of Humanity in Behalf of the Miſeries and Sufferings of our Fellow Creatures. Nor are theſe Sentiments peculiar to Chriſtianity; they have their Foundation in Nature, and extend as far as Reaſon and Senſe prevail; and it is to the Pen of an Heathen we owe that memorable ſaying, *Homo ſum, nihil humanum a me alienum puto.*

But however agreeable theſe Works are to the Senſe and Reaſon of Mankind, whilſt they conſider them only in general, yet in making the Application to particular Caſes in order to Practice, many Difficulties are moved; and Men, unwilling to undergo the Trouble or the Expence which attend on Works of Charity, or lay aſide their Prejudices and Reſentments againſt Perſons whoſe Misfortunes and Calamities have reduced them to be Objects of Charity, have found out many Limitations on theſe Duties; and have let in ſo many partial Conſiderations and Reſtrictions, that Mercy and Humanity, which naturally extend to all the World, ſeldom reach to one Country, oſtentimes not to all the Parts of one Family.

To remove theſe Kinds of Pretences or Prejudices, was the direct View of our Lord

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in ſtating the Caſe of the good *Samaritan*; and the Perſon diſcourſing with him led him into this Conſideration, by admitting the Love of our Neighbour to be a fundamental Duty, and immediately enquiring after Limitations and Reſtrictions upon the Practice of the Duty. That this was the Caſe will appear upon conſidering the whole Paſſage, of which the Text is a Part.

At the 25th Verſe, a Lawyer ſtood up, and tempted our Lord, ſaying, *Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal Life?* Our Lord refers him to the Law, and aſks him what he read there. He anſwers out of the Law—*Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind; and thy Neighbour as thyſelf.* Our Saviour replies, *Thou haſt anſwered well: this do, and thou ſhalt live.* Thus far all was right; and had the Enquirer ſtopt here, we ſhould have had no Reaſon to ſuſpect but that his Principles at leaſt were ſound and uncorrupt. He had great Reaſon to be ſatisfied with the Anſwer, when he had received that Approbation from our Lord, *This do, and thou ſhalt live.*—But he goes on, and in the Words of the 29th Verſe it follows,—*But he, willing*

ling to juſtify himſelf, ſaid unto Jeſus, And who is my Neighbour? What now is it that he would juſtify himſelf from? No Charge had been brought againſt him; ſo far from it, that our Lord had commended his diſcreet Anſwer; and if he acted according to the Terms he had propoſed, our Lord had promiſed him Life. This can be no otherwiſe accounted for but from the Conſciouſneſs of the Perſon himſelf, who knew very well that his Practice was not conformable to the general Rule he had laid down, and which had been approved and commended by our Lord. Our Saviour's ſaying to him, THIS DO, *and thou ſhalt live*, called him to compare his Practice with the Rule he had propoſed; and upon a ſecret Compariſon made in his own Mind, he found that to juſtify himſelf, the Terms of the Rule muſt be explained and limited; and therefore he ſays, *Who is my Neighbour?* In the Senſe of the Law, and according to our Saviour's Expoſition of it, every Man who wants our Aſſiſtance, and whom we are able to aſſiſt, is our Neighbour, and as ſuch entitled to our good Offices. The *Jews* had ſome very near Neighbours, in the reſtrained Senſe of the Word, with whom they were ſo far from

from entertaining any Intercourſe of good Offices, that all common Civilities had ceaſed among them: thoſe were the *Samaritans*; and ſo far were the Reſentments of the *Jews* carried, that when our Saviour deſired a Woman of *Samaria* to give him a little Water to drink, ſhe expreſſes great Wonder at it, and ſays, *How is it that thou, being a Jew, aſkeſt Drink of me, which am a Woman of Samaria?* And the Evangeliſt gives the Reaſon of her Wonder—*for the Jews have no Dealings with the Samaritans*—(John iv. 9.) This being the Caſe, when our Saviour put eternal Life upon *Obedience* to this Law, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf*, there was great Reaſon to aſk the Queſtion, *Who is my Neighbour?* Had our Lord told him, in Conformity to the Opinions and Practices of the *Jews*, that they only were Neighbours who were of the Family and Stock of *Abraham*, or of the ſame Faith and Religion with themſelves, the Man had found what he ſought after, a Juſtification of himſelf: but when our Saviour, demanding his Opinion upon the Caſe of the good *Samaritan*, had forced him into a Confeſſion that even the *Samaritan* was his Neighbour, he ſtood con-

demned out of his own Mouth; and upon the Example of one, whom he reckoned his Enemy, was ſent away with this ſhort Reproof and Admonition, *Go, and do thou likewiſe.*

The Parable of the good *Samaritan* is ſo well known, that I ſhall but juſt mention the Circumſtances of it:—One travelling from *Jeruſalem* fell among Thieves, was robbed and wounded. A Prieſt and a *Levite*; who were, in every Senſe of the Word, Neighbours to the unfortunate Man; and if, in Duties of common and general Obligation, one can be more obliged than another, they were, by Character, eſpecially obliged to relieve this poor Neighbour; but they looked on him, and paſſed by on the other Side. A *Samaritan*, excluded by the *Jews* from all Rights of Neighbourhood, came by, and had Compaſſion on the Sufferer; he dreſſed his Wounds himſelf, and afterwards placed him, at his own Expence, under the Care of one, who was to ſee the Cure perfected.

The Queſtion now was, who was Neighbour to this unfortunate Man, in the Senſe of the Law, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf.* As the Caſe was ſtated, there was

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no Room to inſiſt on the near Relation the Prieſt and *Levite* bore to the wounded Man; the nearer their Relation, the worſe Neighbours were they for neglecting him; no Room to object againſt the *Samaritan*, his Want of Relation, or his Difference in Religion; the leſs and the fewer his private Obligations were, the more diſintereſted was his Obedience to the Law, and the better Neighbour was he. Upon the whole of this Caſe, our *Lord*'s Concluſion is, *Go, and do thou likewiſe.*

Taking then this Direction of our bleſſed Saviour, as it ſtands explained by theſe Circumſtances, it will lead us to conſider,

I. The Nature and Extent of Charity, or Love to our Neighbour.

II. The Value of the Excuſes which Men frequently make for Neglect of this Duty. And,

III. The Excellency of that particular Charity, which gives Occaſion to this Day's Meeting.

I. Of the Nature and Extent of Charity, or Love to our Neighbour.

I obſerved to you before, that the principal Intention of our bleſſed Saviour was not to ſhew the Neceſſity of Works of Mercy, for

ſor that under certain Limitations was admitted on all Sides. Nor was it to recommend one Kind of Charity in Preference to another, but to ſhew the Extent of all. In ſtating a Caſe, it was neceſſary to inſtance in ſome Sort of charitable Work; but the Concluſion, *Go, and do thou likewiſe*, is not confined to that Kind of Work only, but is intended to ſhew us who are our Neighbours in Regard to Works of Mercy and Compaſſion in every Kind.

The Works of Mercy are as various, and of as many Kinds, as the Wants and Infirmities of Men, which are the Objects of Mercy. Were Men perfect, there would be nothing in them to pity or compaſſionate. Every Kind, therefore, and every Degree of Miſery is an Object of Mercy; and whether Men are expoſed to Calamities by the Neceſſity of their Condition, and the overruling Providence of God; or whether they bring them on themſelves by Sin and Wickedneſs, or by Folly and Indiſcretion; yet ſtill, conſidered as miſerable, they are Objects of Pity. If this were not ſo, Mercy would not be one of the Attributes of the Deity. For he is not moved by a Fellow-feeling of our Calamities, or any Apprehenſion

ſion for himſelf; for no Evil can approach him. Sin and Wickedneſs are attended with Guilt as well as Miſery, and therefore alſo Objects of Juſtice and Puniſhment; and it may, perhaps, be a Caſe attended with Difficulties, when we attempt to reconcile the Operations of Juſtice and Mercy, with Reſpect to the ſame Subject. But if God be a God of Mercy, as undoubtedly he is, the Concluſion muſt ſtand, that Miſery, viewed by the Eye of Reaſon, is an Object of Compaſſion; and the Conſequence muſt be, that, in the Reaſon of Things, Mercy is as extenſive as Miſery; and not to be confined, by any particular or partial Conſiderations, to Miſery of one Kind, or of one Man more than another. If we conſider ourſelves, therefore, merely as reaſonable Creatures, no Reaſon can be aſſigned for excluding any Object of Miſery from our Pity and Compaſſion. But if we conſider ourſelves as Men, there is another and perhaps a more ſenſible Inducement to the Practice of the Works of Mercy, and which upon Examination will be found, as far as our Power of doing good goes, of like general Influence. And this ariſes from reflecting, that there is no Miſery we ſee, to which we are not ourſelves

ſelves liable. The Caſe therefore of the Miſerable is a common Caſe, and in ſome Senſe every Man's own. If we find ourſelves better than others, ſo as to avoid the Calamities which Sin and Iniquity bring upon many; or wiſer than others, ſo as to ſhun the Evils which Folly and Indiſcretion draw down upon Numbers; this is ſo far from being a Reaſon why we ſhould deſpiſe or neglect their Sufferings, that it daily reminds us to aſk of ourſelves this Queſtion, *Who made thee to differ from another?* And if we anſwer it as we ſhould, it will furniſh us with another Reaſon for the Exerciſe of Charity, which will extend to all Men.

For, if all Men are the Sons of one common Father; if all Conditions of Life are the Appointment of one common Maſter; no Man can be reckoned a Stranger to us, who is Son of the ſame Father, and Servant of the ſame Maſter; however he may, for Reaſons unknown to us, be placed in a lower Condition of Life, and called to ſerve in a meaner Station, endowed with leſs and fewer Abilities.

Carry theſe Conſiderations with you into the World, and view the Wants and Neceſſities of the Poor; liſten to the Cries of Widows

Widows and Orphans, to the Moans and Complaints of thoſe who ſuffer under the Torments of Body or of Mind: take into your View the Follies and the Weakneſſes of Men, who are perpetually ſtruggling with the Inconveniences, which a little Prudence might have prevented, but which require a great Deal of Care and Sorrow either to cure, or to bear them; and think a little, what Reaſon, what the Senſe of your own Infirmities, what the Regard due to the common Father and Maſter of all, require at your Hands. One duly attentive to theſe Reaſons, could never fall into the little Conſiderations, whether *this* miſerable Man was his Countryman or Townſman, whether *the other* was of the ſame Party or Opinion with himſelf; for the great and true Reaſons on which Mercy and Charity are founded, exclude all ſuch little Reſpects and Relations.

As the Caſe ſtands thus upon the Foot of Reaſon, and the natural Sentiments of Men, ſo likewiſe have the Precepts of the Goſpel bound theſe Duties upon us in the ſame Extent.

Honour, Eſteem, and Reverence, are due to thoſe who deſerve Honour, Eſteem, and Reverence;

Reverence; but Love is a Debt due to all Men, and is a Debt never to be fully paid and exhauſted. Therefore St. *Paul* commands, that we *render* to every Man *his Due*, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour *is due:* but when he comes to ſpeak of Love, he varies his Style, and conſiders us in this Reſpect as Debtor to every Man: *owe* no Man any Thing, *but to love one another*. As if he had ſaid, all other Debts due to particular Perſons, you muſt take Care to diſcharge; but Love is due to all, and you muſt never think of paying or clearing the Debt of Love to each other; for that is a Debt which will be owing as long as you live; it is a perpetual Duty, and can never have an End. In the ſame Manner are the Precepts of Love and Mercy enjoined by our bleſſed Saviour in general Terms, not confining them to particular Objects, but leaving them at large, and open, to be applied to all Men: *Bleſſed*, ſays he, *are the Merciful, for they ſhall obtain Mercy*. Had this been a Duty owing to any Perſons, as they ſtand particularly related to us, our Lord would not have left this material Duty imperfect, by neglecting to ſpecify the proper Objects of it; but having directed our Love

Love and Mercy to no Men in particular, we muſt conclude that all in general are the Objects of it.

If we conſider theſe Laws as derived from the Author of Nature, and of the Goſpel, we ſhall find that they proceeded from a Love as univerſal as that which they enjoin; the general Good of Mankind is the End provided for in theſe Laws. The Miſeries and Calamities of Life are many, and not to be avoided; and perhaps wiſe Men, though they complain leaſt, feel them moſt. It is a melancholy Thing to reflect how much of this Miſery is of our own making, and what a great Abatement might be made in the Sorrows of Life, if every Man would but lend his Hand to make himſelf and the reſt of the World happy. The unkind Offices we daily receive from Malice, Ill-nature, and Revenge, from Envy, and cauſeleſs Reſentments, make a much greater Figure in the Calamities of Life, than all the Evils which the Providence of God and the Condition of human Life bring on us. And even the Calamities which cannot be avoided, might be mitigated by the kind Offices of our Brethren. And therefore to oblige Men to Charity and Mercy, is to unite them

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in a Confederacy againſt the Evils and Miſeries of Life; that no ſooner ſhall Misfortune ſeize one, but all ſhall be alarmed, and Help flow in from every Quarter; that every Hand ſhall bring Aſſiſtance, and every Tongue bring Comfort to the Afflicted; and each Man's Happineſs be the common Concern, while every Man loves his Neighbour as himſelf. What a bleſſed State would this be! and how much Happineſs did the wiſe Author of Nature deſign for us, when he made the common Intereſt of Mankind to be every particular Man's Duty! What Love to Man did the Author of the Goſpel ſhew, when he required it, as a Mark of our being his Diſciples, that we ſhould love one another!

Having conſidered now the Extent of this great Duty of Love and Mercy towards our Brethren, it will be eaſy in the ſecond Place to eſtimate by this Meaſure what Value there is in the Excuſes which are frequently made for the Neglect of this Duty.

But to ſpeak without Confuſion on this Subject, it is neceſſary to diſtinguiſh between Love, as merely a Sentiment and Habit of the Mind, and as coupled with a Power and Ability to exert itſelf in external Acts of

Mercy

Mercy. Conſidered as an Habit and Sentiment of the Mind, it muſt be univerſal, without Exception; and no Pretence whatever can juſtify Malevolence and Hatred in any Inſtance. But it may be, and often is the Caſe, that thoſe who have the Habit of this Virtue, are able to exert it in very few Inſtances; they are too poor to give Alms, too ignorant to give Advice, of too little Conſideration in the World to aid or protect their Neighbours. In all theſe Caſes Want of Ability is ſomething more than an Excuſe, for an Excuſe goes to the Omiſſion of Duty; but there can be no Duty or Obligation on any Man to do what he has no Power or Ability to perform. But yet let the meaneſt among us conſider, that there are Duties of Love proper to their Station; if they have no Money to beſtow, yet they have good or ill Words to beſtow on their Neighbours; they are able to aſſiſt in vindicating or aſperſing their Characters; and this is an Inſtance in which their Good-will or Malevolence may be as effectually ſhewn, as if they had great Revenues to diſpoſe of; and I am afraid the poorer Sort, who are Petitioners for Charity of another Kind,

want often to be put in Mind of *this Kind* of Charity themſelves. But to go on.

Where Men's Fortunes and Stations in the World enable them to exert their Love and Mercy in Acts of Generoſity and Benevolence to Perſons in Diſtreſs, there is often an Unwillingneſs, and always an Excuſe to attend it. From what has been ſaid of the Duty in general, it is evident, that to confine our Charity to Relations, Acquaintance, or Men of the ſame Country, is acting inconſiſtently with the great Reaſons on which the Duty itſelf is founded, and is therefore a Breach of Duty which cannot be juſtified; and it is indeed that very Pretence which our Saviour intended to exclude and condemn in the Parable of the good *Samaritan*. But what ſhall we ſay to the perſonal Merit of thoſe who are Objects of Charity? In the Parable the Perſon relieved was a Stranger to him who relieved him, and was known to him only by his Miſery and Diſtreſs; and therefore in this Example ſet before us, the perſonal Character had no Influence in the Charity. And in other Places of the Goſpel we are exhorted to follow the Example ſet us by our heavenly Father,

ther, who maketh his Sun to riſe on the Evil and on the Good, and ſendeth Rain on the Juſt and on the Unjuſt. But as no Man's Ability to do good in any Way is unlimited, it is commendable ſurely to ſeek after the propereſt and moſt deſerving Objects of Charity; and in this Conſideration the Virtue and Innocence of the Sufferer muſt be of great Moment.

There would perhaps be little Reaſon upon the Whole to be very nice and curious in the Choice of Objects, were it not for the many Frauds and Cheats which are daily practiſed upon the Charity of well-diſpoſed Perſons. Begging is become a Trade, and without Doubt it is a very wicked one; it is not only a Cheat on the Giver, but it is robbing the Stock of the Poor, and perverting what was intended for the Comfort of real Diſtreſs, to the Support of Idleneſs. It is greatly injurious to the Poor in another Reſpect, as it lays a general Suſpicion upon all who apply for Alms; and many a proper Object fails of the Relief due to him, becauſe he can ſay no more in his true Caſe than Counterfeits ſay every Day in a falſe one.

There is another very great Diſcourage-

ment which charitable Perſons are under, from obſerving the ill Uſe which the Poor often make of their Benefactions to them. One would imagine that a Man who wanted Food and Raiment, and all other Neceſſaries of Life, was pretty well ſecured againſt the Exceſſes of ſtrong Liquors, or any other Temptations, which muſt neceſſarily exhauſt his little Stock, and leave him unable to provide for his Wants. But the Caſe is far otherwiſe; the general Corruption of Manners too plainly to be ſeen in this Country, has ſpread among the loweſt; and Neceſſity itſelf is grown luxurious. It is very much to be lamented, that ſo much Art and Skill have been ſhewn of late Years, to make Drunkenneſs the cheapeſt of all Vices; for it will, it already has made it the commoneſt, and let in all the Vices which follow this Exceſs upon the pooreſt of our People; who were formerly ſo far happy in their Poverty, that their Want ſecured them from many Vices to which their richer Neighbours were expoſed.

How to adviſe charitable Perſons to ſteer clear of theſe Inconveniences in their private Benefactions, I know not; perhaps it may be a good Rule in general not to be too curious,

curious, or hard to be ſatisfied in theſe Caſes.—But with Reſpect to the great Work of Charity, which has called us together this Day, I can with Pleaſure obſerve to you, that it ſtands free of theſe Difficulties; it will appear ſo to do from the Nature of the Charity itſelf, and the Method in which it is conducted: and though neither the Perſons who have undertaken this good Work deſire to have their Praiſes ſet forth, nor is it my Intention to do it; yet, in Juſtice to the Work itſelf, give me Leave to mention very briefly ſome Circumſtances attending it, that may recommend it to the Approbation of good People.

In the firſt Place then, the Perſons admitted to partake in this Charity are real Objects, and from the Nature of the Thing they muſt be ſo: the Blind, the Lame, the diſeaſed of various Kinds, reſort hither for a Cure of their Evils. That ſuch are proper Objects of Charity, there is no Doubt; but when Complaints of this Nature are uſed to move private Charity, they are often counterfeited; and the Money intended for the Relief of a poor Cripple, is perhaps given to a ſturdy Vagabond. But that Caſe can never happen here; for Cheats and Coun-

terfeits never come to an Hoſpital to be cured; they never deſire that their Complaints ſhould be examined by the ſkilful Eye and Hand of the Surgeon. Whatever therefore may happen in other Caſes, you may be ſure to meet with no Frauds of this Kind in this Charity.

There are Diſtempers, indeed, which may be pretended, and in judging of which, even the ſkilful may be impoſed on; but neither will ſuch Frauds come here; for nobody will pretend ſuch Diſeaſes, merely for the Sake of going into a Courſe of Phyſic, and ſubmitting to the Rules and Orders of a Place, which, though it affords ample Proviſion for the Wants of the Miſerable, yet it affords no Temptation to the Idle and Vicious, that they ſhould deſire to come under the Rule and Diſcipline of it.

Secondly, Whatever is given in Support of this Inſtitution, flows from the true and generous Principle of Charity, before deſcribed: all Perſons are entitled to Relief here, if they really want it; and every Contributor is moved by the general Regard to the Good of Men, without any Regard to the little Partialities, which often influence our private Charities, whether we intend they ſhould or

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no. But to ſubſcribe to ſupport an Hoſpital, open to all juſt Complaints, is a general Subſcription for the Aſſiſtance and Comfort of Men in Miſery and Diſtreſs, without any other Conſideration whatever: and therefore this Charity has this excellent Ingredient in it, that it is *Love without Partiality.*

Laſtly, There is one Inducement more, which is the good Management and Oeconomy ſhewn in the Application of this Charity. I have mentioned now a Thing worthy to be highly commended and extolled, but not by me in this Audience. I ſhall take Notice of it, therefore, only as a Fact, a Fact publiſhed by laying the Accounts of this Charity before the World, and in which every Man, who pleaſes, may at an eaſy Rate have full Satisfaction.

If this Conſideration is, and ſurely it is a great Inducement to Benefactors to encourage this good Work; it is an Argument alſo to thoſe who have employed their Time and their Pains in the Affairs of this Houſe, to perſevere in this Work of Love: their Charity is more, perhaps, than they imagine: others give whatever their Proportion amounts to; but theſe, by their good and wiſe Adminiſtration, encourage many to

give; it is a Circumſtance which they may reflect on with Comfort here, and it will ſurely have its Reward hereafter.

Go on therefore with Cheerfulneſs, in this great and good Employment; and in Confidence that you are ſerving a Maſter, who will not forget this your Work and Labour of Love.

DISCOURSE XII.

DEUT. xxxii. 45, 46.

And Moſes made an End of ſpeaking all theſe Words to all Iſrael.

And he ſaid unto them, Set your Hearts unto all the Words, which I teſtify among you this Day; which ye ſhall command your Children to obſerve, to do all the Words of this Law.

YOU have in the Text the laſt Piece of Advice which *Moſes* gave to the People of *Iſrael*; for on the *ſelf-ſame Day*, on which he made this Exhortation, he was ſummoned by God to depart from this World; accordingly he died on the Mountain of *Nebo*, and was gathered to his People.

The laſt Advice of dying Friends naturally

rally makes a ſtrong Impreſſion on the Minds of thoſe who ſurvive them; and it is as natural for thoſe who are leaving this World, to make the Thing, which they eſteem to be of the greateſt Conſequence and Importance to their Friends, who are to ſtay behind them, the Subject-matter of their laſt Advice.

Conſider now the Character of *Moſes*; the many Years he ſpent in conducting the People of *Iſrael* from *Egypt* to the Land of Promiſe; the high Office he bore, by being appointed by God a Prophet and Lawgiver to his People: conſider him, after a long Courſe of Teaching and Exhortation, giving his laſt Advice before he died; and you muſt needs think the Happineſs of the People to be extremely concerned in the Matter recommended to them, by ſo great a Friend, by one of ſuch Authority, and under ſuch Circumſtances.

The Advice is no leſs intereſting than is to be expected: it aims at laying a ſolid Foundation of Happineſs for that and all ſucceeding Generations; by inſtructing the People how to perpetuate to their Poſterity the Knowledge of God and his Law, and to make him their conſtant Friend and Protector;

tector; namely, by inſtilling into the Minds of their Children, a Senſe of the great Things which God had done for them and their Forefathers, and by forming them early to Obedience to the divine Law under which they lived:—*Ye ſhall command your Children to obſerve and do all the Words of this Law.*

The *Jews* had ſtill a greater Reaſon to be careful and conſtant in diſcharging this Duty towards their Children; they had not *only* the laſt Command of their great Law-giver for it, but they well knew that they were diſtinguiſhed from the Reſt of the World by Providence for the Sake of this Duty. Their great Anceſtor *Abraham* was choſen to be the Head of a great Nation, that he might, and becauſe God knew he would, be diligent to tranſmit to his Poſterity the Knowledge of God's Laws, and to breed them up in Obedience to them. In the eighteenth Chapter of the Book of *Geneſis*, God declares his Purpoſe of making *Abraham a great and mighty Nation*; and that *all the Nations of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed in him.* At the 19th Verſe, the Reaſon of this peculiar Regard to *Abraham* is given; *For I know him, that he will command*

mand his Children and his Houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the Way of the Lord, to do Juſtice and Judgment.

That the Command of *Moſes* lays an Obligation on Parents, to make Uſe of their Authority with their Children to bring them into Subjection to the Law of God, is put out of all Doubt by the Language of the Text. They were to *command* their Children to obſerve and do all the Words of the Law. But this Precept had a larger and more extenſive View, being given not merely as the Advice of a Preacher, but as the Injunction of a great Lawgiver preſcribing a proper Method to eſtabliſh and ſecure the Proſperity of a Nation. The Education therefore of the Children of a Country may, and ought, in all wiſe Governments, to be conſidered as a national Concern.

This Concluſion may appear, perhaps, with greater Force, as ſupported by the Declaration of God concerning *Abraham*, juſt before mentioned. God ſaw that *Abraham* would command his Children and Houſhold after him, to keep the Way of the Lord, and to do Juſtice and Judgment; and therefore he determined to make him a great and mighty Nation. Now if this Diſpoſition,

poſition, ſeen and approved in *Abraham*, has no Relation to the Office of a public Magiſtrate, the Reaſon given for making *Abraham* Head of a great People, is a very ſtrange one. For if the Magiſtrate has, and ought to have, no Concern in ſeeing the Youth of the Country brought up in the Fear of God, *Abraham*'s Diſpoſition to take this Care upon him could be no Reaſon for making him the Head of a great Nation.

To judge of the Methods which have been, or may be applied to propagate, or preſerve Religion and the Fear of God in the World, we muſt conſider the Nature, Capacities, and Circumſtances of Men in general; the Influences under which they act; and which of them may be properly made Uſe of in the Caſe in Queſtion. Religion being the Service of a free Agent, all external Force is excluded as abſolutely improper: Inſtruction is the proper Application to a reaſonable Mind; and were Men under no Influence but that of Reaſon, Inſtruction would be the *only proper* Application: but Men are born with Paſſions, as well as Reaſon, and the Paſſions grow ſtrong and turbulent, much ſooner than Reaſon

Reaſon comes to ſuch Maturity as to be able to correct and reſtrain them; and therefore Authority is wanted as well as Inſtruction, to form the Mind of Men to Virtue and Religion.

I am ſenſible there are ſome, who have their Objections to this Method of propagating Religion, who think all Men ſhould be left free to judge for themſelves, without having the Prejudices of Education thrown into the Scale on either Side. They ſee that in Chriſtian Countries, all are, through the Power of Education, Chriſtians; in Mahometan Countries, they are, for the ſame Reaſon, Mahometans; and they think true Religion ſhould reject the Uſe of thoſe Means, which ſerve indifferently to promote Truth and Falſehood.

It is no uncommon Thing for Men to purſue their Speculations till they loſe Sight of Nature; the Conſequence of which is, that they fall into Notions contradictory to the Experience of Mankind, and abſolutely impoſſible to be reduced to practice.

Look into the Hiſtory of Ages paſt, there is no Inſtance to be found of Children brought up free from the Impreſſions of Cuſtom

Cuſtom and Education; conſider the Nature and Condition of Men, and it is impoſſible there ever ſhould be.

Children have Eyes and Ears; what they ſee, they naturally imitate; what they hear, influences their tender Minds. And where Parents neglect the Care of their Children, they are left to Chance, and pick up Notions and Opinions from others; perhaps from the Footman, who oftentimes is conſtant Companion to the Heir of the Family. So that where Parents omit to inſtruct their Children, it is not leaving them to their own Freedom of Judgment, but it is leaving them to receive Impreſſions from far worſe Hands.

But as this Objection, if there be any Weight in it, directly impeaches the natural Means ordained by Providence for preſerving true Religion, and the Means enjoined as well under the Chriſtian, as the Jewiſh Diſpenſation, for perpetuating the great Truths of Revelation, it may be proper, perhaps, to take this Matter a little higher, and conſider how it ſtands on the Principles of Reaſon and human Nature.

Did Men come into this World perfect, and equally perfect, having their Minds ſtored

ſtored with all neceſſary Ideas, and able to make a proper Uſe of all the Faculties of the Underſtanding, there might be ſome Reaſon, perhaps, in ſaying, "Leave themſelves to judge for themſelves." But as the Caſe is otherwiſe, and we bring little more into the World with us, than an animal Life, and arrive by ſlow Degrees to the Uſe of Reaſon and the Knowledge of Things about us, it is the Direction of Nature, in Conſequence of this Courſe of Nature, that Parents ſhould teach their Children, as they grow capable of learning, the Things that are neceſſary to their well-being.

The great Force of Cuſtom and Education, whether rightly applied, or otherwiſe, could not be long unobſerved in the World: as ſoon as it was obſerved, it became a ſtrong Call upon the natural Affections of Parents, to guard the tender Minds of their Children againſt wrong Impreſſions, and to prevent the Growth of evil Habits in them. Without the Exerciſe of this Care in ſome Degree, Authority cannot be maintained on the Part of Parents, nor Duty required on the Part of Children. If Parents have nothing to teach, what have Children to obey? What then muſt become of the natural

Duties

Duties ariſing from this Relation, when nothing will remain, unleſs perhaps ſome Degree of Fondneſs, ſuch as brute Creatures have by Inſtinct of Nature.

That this natural Force of Cuſtom and Education was intended by Providence to act in Conjunction with Reaſon, for the Support of Virtue and Religion, there can be no Doubt; and whoever conſiders what God has done, by natural or ſupernatural Means, for the Sake of Religion, will ſee abundant Evidence for this Truth.

But, when the Ways of Men grew corrupt, when Cuſtom and Education were gone over to the Side of Vice and Superſtition, and Reaſon and Religion were left alone to ſtruggle for themſelves; it is hardly to be imagined how univerſally the Corruption ſpread, and how ſtrong Poſſeſſion was given to Idolatry and Superſtition throughout the World. It may be hard to ſay, what induced Men at firſt to conſecrate Birds and Beaſts, Stocks and Stones, and to fall down and worſhip them. But when once thoſe Follies were introduced, Cuſtom and Education ſpread them far and wide; and they took ſuch deep Root, that human Reaſon could not ſhake them, but was con-

tent for Ages together to wear the Chains of blind Superſtition. Cuſtom and Education cannot be ſhut out of the Caſe; and Influence they muſt and will have; and if they are not ſecured on the Side of Reaſon, and taken in as Aſſiſtants to it, they will ſoon grow to be Tyrants over Reaſon; and Men will think and act as if they had none.

We read in ancient Story of a People, who uſed, when their Parents and Relations were grown old and infirm, to kill them and feaſt on them. The Cuſtom appeared, as well it might, barbarous and inhuman in the Eyes of all civilized Nations: but thoſe People being aſked in their Turn, what they thought of thoſe, who ſuffered their aged Parents to linger and die of themſelves, and then burnt or buried their dead Bodies, they expreſſed the greateſt Abhorrence for ſuch Impiety. Had the *Egyptians*, or any other People, been examined in like Manner, upon any or all their Superſtitions, their Sentiments in Favour of their national Cuſtoms would have been found as ſtrong, and as hard to be rectified.

So general and ſo ſtrong is the Force of Cuſtom and Education, that the Influence may be ſaid to be natural to the Mind of Man;

Man; and if the Influence is natural, it was, doubtleſs, deſigned by the Author of Nature to be ſubſervient to good Purpoſes. That he intended it for this Uſe, is manifeſt alſo from his making this Uſe of it, and from his interpoſing to correct the Abuſes to which this natural Influence was but too liable through the Paſſions and Corruptions of Men.

Conſider, from the Beginning of Things what Proviſion was made for propagating Religion in the World. *Adam* was created in the State of Manhood; and as he came a Man, and not a Child, out of the Hands of his Creator, he brought into the World with him all Knowledge neceſſary to a Man; of which the Knowledge of God and true Religion was the moſt neceſſary Part. Of him then ſufficient Care was taken.

But all after him came Infants into the World, void of Knowledge, capable of coming at it but by ſlow Degrees, and liable to many Errors in the only Thing they had to depend on, the Uſe of their Reaſon. What Care now was taken to direct them right in this momentous Affair of Religion? Was it not plainly this, that they were put into the Hands of an In-

ſtructor, who was himſelf inſtructed by God, able to teach them the great Works of Providence in the Creation of all Things, and to point out to them the Duty owing from the Creature to the Creator?

How long this Influence continued to preſerve a Senſe of true Religion, we know not; probably in ſome tolerable Degree for many Ages; for many Ages paſſed before God, for the Wickedneſs of Men, deſtroyed the World by a Deluge.

Conſider now again what Care was taken of Religion at the Reſtoration of the World after the Deluge; the Wicked with all their ungodly Deeds periſhed in the Waters; one diſtinguiſhed *Preacher of Righteouſneſs*, with his Family, was ſaved, to be the Father of a new World, and to teach the Ways of Righteouſneſs to his Poſterity.—And what was this, but uniting once more the Force of Reaſon, Education, and Cuſtom in the Cauſe of Virtue and Holineſs; and turning its natural Influence into its proper Channel, which had been divided and perverted by the Wickedneſs of Men?

After the Deluge, as the World grew populous, it grew corrupt again; and Idolatry overſpread the Face of the Earth. God had promiſed

promiſed never to deſtroy the Earth again for the Wickedneſs of the Inhabitants. But to check the Courſe of Impiety, and to keep up a Senſe and Evidence of true Religion in the Midſt of an idolatrous Generation, he thought fit in his Wiſdom to raiſe up a Nation to be his own peculiar People. He made Choice of *Abraham* to be Head and Father of this Nation; and we are at no Loſs to account for the Reaſon of this Choice; for God has told us with what View he elected *Abraham—I know him, that he will command his Children and his Houſhold after him, and they ſhall* keep *the Way of the Lord, to do Juſtice and Judgment.*

When the Deſcendants from *Abraham* were grown numerous enough to make a People of themſelves, God was pleaſed to give them a Law, introduced and confirmed by many ſignal Deliverances, and many Signs and Wonders; and to perpetuate the Memory of them through all Generations, many Rites and Ceremonies were inſtituted, to be conſtant Parts of the national Religion; which repreſented, and ſet before the Eyes of the People, the great Things which God had done for them; ſuch, for inſtance,

was the Paſſover; ſuch was that ſolemn Profeſſion to be made at the offering of the firſt-Fruits, recorded in the Book of *Deuteronomy*. He who brought the Offering, was to ſpeak and ſay before the Lord his God—

" —A *Syrian* ready to periſh was my " Father, and he went down into *Egypt*, " and ſojourned there with a few, and be- " came there a Nation, great, mighty, and " populous.

" And the *Egyptians* evil-intreated us, " and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard " Bondage.

" And when we cried unto the Lord " God of our Fathers, the Lord heard our " Voice, and looked on our Afflictions, and " our Labour, and our Oppreſſion.

" And the Lord brought us forth out of " *Egypt*, with a mighty Hand, and with an " out-ſtretched Arm, and with great Ter- " ribleneſs, and with Signs, and with " Wonders.

" And he hath brought us into this " Place, and hath given us this Land, even " a Land that floweth with Milk and " Honey.

" And

" And now behold I have brought the " firſt Fruits of the Land, which thou, O " Lord, haſt given me."

Theſe Inſtitutions, introduced at firſt by poſitive Law, ſoon obtained the Force of national Cuſtoms, and became a ſtrong Barrier againſt the Superſtition of the idolatrous Nations round *Judea*; and they were intended to anſwer this Purpoſe.

But it muſt be obſerved of theſe Inſtitutions in general, that they were not intended to operate merely by the Force of Cuſtom; but were adapted to preſerve and renew the Memory of the true Reaſons in which the Religion of the *Jews* was founded. If you had been to reaſon with a *Jew* upon the Obedience due to the Law of *Moſes*, could you ſay more to him than what the Feaſt of the Paſſover taught him, and what the Profeſſion made at the offering of the firſt Fruits contained? Theſe Inſtitutions therefore intended to make Cuſtom *ſubſervient* to Reaſon and true Religion; and they were *ſo* conſtituted, that they could go no where *as Cuſtoms*, without carrying with them the true Reaſon of Religion.

Upon this Foot the *Jewiſh* Religion ſtood, till God thought fit by a new Reve-

lation to call all the World to Repentance, and Obedience to the Goſpel of Chriſt Jeſus.

The Nations of the Earth were Idolaters before the coming of Chriſt; and their Religious Worſhip was not only directed to falſe Objects, but was in itſelf impure and corrupt, and tended to introduce great Depravity of Manners. The ſeveral Forms of Superſtition in ſeveral Countries had Eſtabliſhment, Education, and Cuſtom, to ſupport them; and theſe preſcriptive Rights had got ſuch ſtrong Poſſeſſion, that there was no Hope of ſeeing them beat out by human Wiſdom. Some few perhaps ſaw the Follies which ſurrounded them; but their Wiſdom was of no Uſe towards reforming the World, whatever it might be to themſelves.

To root out this inveterate Evil required ſupernatural Aſſiſtance; and *yet ſuch* Aſſiſtance as was conſiſtent with the Freedom and Reaſon of human Minds, and agreeable to the Nature of Religion; which loſes its very Being, when it is ſeparated from Freedom and Reaſon.

The Power of Miracles was ſuch an Aſſiſtance; for Miracles are an Appeal to Reaſon,

Reaſon, as much as the Works of Nature are; and therefore Miracles offered in Support of true Religion, are to be conſidered as new Arms put into the Hand of Reaſon, to enable it to ſubdue the Powers of corrupt Cuſtom and Education.

My Subject does not lead me to conſider all the Purpoſes which Providence had to ſerve by the Power of Miracles; but this manifeſtly was one, though not the only one, to awaken the Attention of the World, to conſider what they and their Fathers had been doing when they fell down before Stocks and Stones, and forgot the Lord who made them, and to whoſe command they ſaw all Nature was obedient.

When Reaſon and true Religion were by this powerful Aſſiſtance ſet free from the Shackles of Idolatry and Superſtition, Miracles ceaſed; and, for perpetuating the Knowledge of God and of his Truth in the World, the natural and ordinary Methods of teaching and inſtructing received an additional Strength under the Goſpel, by ſetting apart an Order of Men, whoſe Buſineſs it ſhould be to publiſh to every Generation the great Things which God had wrought for them through Chriſt Jeſus.

This,

This, I ſay, was an *additional* Strength to the ordinary and natural Means of Education, but was never deſigned to ſuperſede it; for Parents are obliged by the Law of the Goſpel, as well as by the Law of Nature, to breed up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; and where *this* Care is wanting, it is rarely that the *other* can take place; Children neglected naturally grow headſtrong and ſelf-willed; and we ſee, by ſad Experience, that they are ſent too late for Inſtruction to the Church, who were never inured to it at Home.

Laying then theſe Things together, conſider, what is there in the preſent Circumſtances of Things that we can do to promote Virtue and Religion in the World? We have only natural and ordinary Means within our Power. May we uſe them? or muſt the Care of Virtue and Religion be given up? If not, the propereſt, I had almoſt ſaid, the only effectual Method to preſerve them, is to lay a Foundation for the Youth of the Country.

But theſe general Reflections do ſo naturally ariſe from what has been ſaid, that I will leave them to your own Thoughts;

and

and go on to conſider the particular Caſe now before us.

The State of Religion in *Ireland* very well deſerves the Attention of every Man in this Kingdom, who has a Concern either for the Purity of the Goſpel, or for the Security of the Government under which we live.

The Reformation was very imperfectly carried on in *Ireland*; and the Bulk of the People have been ever ſince, and ſtill are Papiſts. The Natives have a Language of their own, extremely hard to be learned or underſtood by any but themſelves, which makes it almoſt impoſſible to convey any Light or Knowledge to them. The Prieſts among them, who talk their Language, being born and bred among them, know as little of any Thing elſe, as the People themſelves do. So that Popery in *Ireland* is old traditionary Popery, without any of the Correction or Improvement which Popery in other Parts has been forced into by the Light of the Reformation. The Learned of the Church of *Rome* have been long palliating and refining their abſurd Doctrines and Practices. Tell them that they worſhip Saints and Images, they will diſtinguiſh between

tween direct Worſhip, and relative Worſhip, between religious Service, and Honour and Reſpect due to the Saints.—But the poor *Iriſh* worſhip Saints and Images, and have never heard even of theſe Refinements; which being invented as Anſwers to Objections, are of no Uſe among a poor People, ſecured by their Ignorance, and a Language underſtood by themſelves only, from all Objections.

Not many Years ago a worthy Clergyman of *Ireland*, with great Pains and Labour, made himſelf Maſter of the Language of the Natives, with an Intent to preach the Goſpel among them. He entered upon the Work, and the Succeſs ſeemed to outrun his Wiſhes: his Audience was numerous, and the People ſeemed to be much affected with his Diſcourſes: but as ſoon as this was perceived, the Prieſts had Orders to publiſh an Excommunication againſt every Perſon who ſhould attend theſe Sermons: the Effect was, that the Preacher was entirely deſerted.

The Caſe is much the ſame in ſome Pariſhes of the Kingdom, which have not a Proteſtant in them, except the Miniſter of the Pariſh; but few perhaps, who underſtand

ſtand his Language, and they reſtrained by all the Terrors, which the Prieſts of *Rome* can infuſe into poor ignorant People, from giving Ear to his Inſtructions. How uncomfortable a Situation muſt this be to an honeſt minded Clergyman, to find himſelf placed in an Office, with a great Truſt annexed to it, and which it is morally impoſſible for him to diſcharge; what a Reproach is it to our Proteſtant Church in the Eyes of the Adverſary, to have Shepherds appointed, and no Flocks to be attended; Rulers ſettled where there are none to be directed; Miniſters without Congregations; Preachers without Hearers!

This great Evil ought to be removed, muſt be removed, as far as proper and reaſonable Methods can prevail; and till *all reaſonable* Methods are tried, the Reproach will remain with us unanſwered.

Conſider this State of Religion; and let every Chriſtian lay his Hand to his Heart, and ſay, whether this Caſe calls for Help or no. Can we be blameleſs, if we look on, and ſee thouſands periſh for whom Chriſt died, without ſo much as offering to help or relieve them? Theſe People, poor as they are, ignorant as they are, are yet Children

Children of the ſame Father with us, Men of the ſame Nature, Fellow Subjects and Fellow Chriſtians: if they know but little of Chriſt, by whoſe name they are called; if they live in Darkneſs and Superſtition, and in blind Obedience to popiſh Tyranny; they are but in the ſame Caſe in which our Forefathers were, and from which we are happily delivered. How ſtrongly do theſe Circumſtances plead their Cauſe! The Reverence we have for the common Father of all; the Benevolence due to our Fellow Creatures; the Love we owe to Men united to us in one and the ſame Society; Compaſſion to their unfortunate Caſe, which was once our own; Regard to the Name of Chriſt, by which they and we are called; do with one Voice exhort, incite, and provoke us to this Labour and Work of Love, in which their preſent and future Happineſs, the Glory of God, and the Honour of the Goſpel, are ſo nearly concerned.

There is another Conſideration well worth your Attention, which though it affords not ſo ſtrong a Reaſon as thoſe before mentioned, yet a ſtrong one it does afford, to encourage you to go on with the good Work you have undertaken; I mean the Proſperity

rity and Welfare of the Conſtitution and Government under which we live.

The preſent Government and the Proteſtant Religion muſt ſtand or fall together; Pápiſts are by Principle Enemies to both; the more ignorant they are, the more determined and deſperate Enemies they will be; as being free from the Reſtraints of Conſcience and Reflection, to yield blind Obedience to their Directors.

The Papiſts in *Ireland*, by the loweſt Computation I have ſeen, are five to two. The Civil and Military Government are in the Hands of Proteſtants, and in Times of public Tranquillity are ſufficient to keep the Papiſts in due Obedience: but whenever the Public has been diſtreſſed by internal Commotions, the Strength of Popery in *Ireland* has been fatally experienced. The Situation of Affairs in *Charles* the Firſt's Time, brought them to take Arms; and the general Maſſacre of the Proteſtants is ſtill freſh in Memory, in which thouſands periſhed by Cruelties unknown even among barbarous Nations.

At the Revolution, the Popery of *Ireland* endangered the Proteſtantiſm of the three Kingdoms, by finding Employment for the Arms

Arms of *England*, when they were wanted elſewhere to ſupport the Cauſe of Liberty and Religion: and ſhould we ever be ſo unhappy as to ſee our Religion and Liberty put again to the Chance of War, there can be no Doubt which Side the *Iriſh* Papiſts would take.

Even in the Times of Peace they are of little Uſe to the Public, being through Want of Education greatly unacquainted with the Arts of civil Life, and Strangers to the Improvements which make Men great and conſiderable. They may be fit for Arms, but they are not fit to be truſted in a Proteſtant Army: many of them indeed take to this Employment; and they are a Seminary for foreign Troops; a Strength bred up among ourſelves, but always at the Service of our Enemies. So that when you compute their Numbers, and their Force, you muſt place their Strength to the Account, not of their natural Prince, the King of *Great Britain*, but rather to ſome foreign Powers, and to thoſe eſpecially, of whom *England* has the greateſt Reaſon to be jealous.

What ſhall we ſay then to this State of the Caſe? Shall theſe great Numbers continue

tinue ſtill to be our Enemies; or ſhall we try to gain their Affections, and make them Friends as well as ſubject to the Government? Shall we ſee them ſtill ſacrificing their Lives due to the Defence of their Country, in the Service of foreign Powers; or ſhall we engage their Hearts and Hands in a nobler Warfare, in the Cauſe of Liberty? Shall we permit them to remain untaught, uncultivated, uſeleſs to themſelves and to the World; or ſhall we ſhew them the Arts of Life and honeſt Induſtry, teach them to be happy, and of Service to themſelves and to the Public?

There can be no Doubt which Part is to be choſen. But as even the temporal Advantages propoſed are not to be obtained but by ſetting theſe poor People free from the Tyranny of Popery, and by opening their Minds to ſee and receive the Truths of the Goſpel; the Methods to be uſed with them muſt be ſuch as are conſiſtent with the Nature of Religion, and ſuch as the Circumſtances of the People will admit. —And ſuch only have you made Choice of.

When you receive Children, whoſe Parents willingly entruſt them to your Care, (and others you ſeek not after) you act by

Commiſſion under the paternal Authority, and are authoriſed by the ſame natural Right, when you teach and inſtruct ſuch Children, as Parents themſelves are when they teach and inſtruct their own. Whoever therefore has any Objection to the Work you are engaged in, muſt firſt diſpute the Parent's Right to educate his own Children, before he can controvert yours.

If the Conſent of Parents gives you a Right, your Charity, and Benevolence in undertaking a Duty, which the poor Parents are incapable of diſcharging themſelves, will not fail to give you a Reward in due Time. Ages to come, when they feel the happy Change, the Foundation of which is now laying, ſhall bleſs your Memory; and thouſands yet unborn may owe their Happineſs in this World, and their Hopes in a better, to this Work and Labour of Love.

Go on then, and may Succeſs wait on your Care. The Wiſhes of all, who wiſh well to their Country, are with you; and every good Man, if he has nothing elſe to give, will beſtow his Prayers, that this Work of the Lord may proſper in your Hands.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XIII.

2 Cor. ix. 12.

For the Adminiſtration of this Service not only ſupplieth the Want of the Saints, but is abundant alſo by many Thankſgivings unto God.

TO take in the full Senſe of the Apoſtle upon this Subject, the 14th Verſe ought to be read together with the Text; and then the Whole will run thus: *For the Adminiſtration of this Service not only ſupplieth the Want of the Saints, but is abundant alſo by many Thankſgivings unto God; and by their Prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding Grace of God in you.*

The Occaſion of theſe Words was in ſhort this: The Apoſtle had been making Collections among the Chriſtians of ſeveral

Countries, for the Relief of the poor diſtreſſed Brethren in *Judea*; and intending ſhortly to viſit *Corinth*, he ſends before him an Exhortation to them to be in Readineſs to anſwer the Hopes and Expectations which themſelves had raiſed in him, that he ſhould receive a large Supply at their Hands. The Chapter of the Text is entirely ſpent in this Argument: the Apoſtle introduces it with excuſing his Writing upon this Subject, ſince he knew how forward they were of their own Accord, and how much their Zeal had provoked and ſtirred up others to be liberal: but then from this very Circumſtance he juſtifies his Application to them, and urges them in a very powerful Manner to make good their fair Promiſes, leſt haply if they ſhould after all be found unprepared at his Coming, both he and they ſhould be *aſhamed* in their *confident Boaſting*. I ſhould not have taken Notice of this Argument made uſe of by the Apoſtle to ſtir up the *Corinthians'* Charity, which is not indeed founded on the Nature of the good Work itſelf, or in the Promiſes of the Goſpel, but for the Sake of obſerving to you, that it is not only lawful, but laudable, to make the natural Paſſions and

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Inclinations of Men ſubſervient to the Cauſe of Virtue and Religion; that it is no Way unbecoming a Preacher of the Goſpel to apply to that Senſe of Shame, to that Love of Credit and good Report, which God has implanted in Men, to be perpetual Incitements to Actions virtuous and praiſeworthy. Theſe Motives however muſt be kept in their proper Place; we may recommend, but they cannot make a Duty; the Ground of our Obedience lies deeper. The Honour of God, the Good of our Brethren, the Care of our own Happineſs, are the Springs from whence all Duties flow; and though we may conſider theſe as diſtinct Heads, yet they always unite in one Stream, and run together without Diviſion: for whilſt we do good to others, we do Honour to God, and take the beſt Care of ourſelves: and the Honour we have for God will as naturally ſhew forth itſelf in the Love of the Brotherhood, as it will certainly end in our own Happineſs.

From theſe Principles the Apoſtle exhorts the *Corinthians* to ſet forward the Charity propoſed to them with a liberal Hand, aſſuring them, that it would be abundant to the Honour and Glory of God,

through many Thankſgivings; that it would ſupply the Wants of the Saints; and that it would return to them in Bleſſings, through the Prayers that would be offered to God in their Behalf.

We muſt not imagine that theſe Principles are peculiar to Works of Charity and Beneficence, for they really extend to all Parts of our Duty; all Religion is derived from them; and there is nothing we are bound to, but as it relates either to the Honour of God, or the Good of Mankind, or our own Welfare.

In treating therefore of this Subject, I ſhall conſider,

Firſt, How theſe Principles influence Religion in general.

Secondly, How plainly and evidently they lead us to Works of Charity and Mercy.

Thirdly, I will ſhew you how effectually they do conſpire to recommend to us that good Work, for the promoting of which, we are this Day met together in the Preſence of God.

Firſt then, let us conſider how theſe Principles influence Religion in general.

Man is a religious Creature, in Conſequence of his being a rational one; our Obligations

ligations to do right ariſe from the natural Powers with which we are endowed, to diſtinguiſh between Right and Wrong; and when in any Caſe, in which we are concerned to act, our Reaſon diſcovers to us what is Right, it at the ſame Time unavoidably fixes our Duty and Obligation.

It is but too plain, that to know and feel the Obligations we are under, is one Thing, and to comply with them in Practice, is another: all wilful Sinners feel the Obligations they are under to do right, and yet are carried by other Inducements, which have greater Force upon their Minds, to do wrong; and where Men comply with their Duty, it is not always, nay, it is perhaps but rarely, for the Sake of that natural Light of Reaſon only, which creates the Duty; but for other Reaſons, which affect their own Intereſt and Convenience. And this ſhews the Difference between the Principles, and the mere Motives of Religion.

A rational Mind ought eſpecially to be influenced by the Power of Reaſon; and if we could ſeparate Men from the corrupt Paſſions and Affections which hang about them, the ſame Light of Reaſon which ſhews them their Duty, would ſufficiently

move and influence their Wills to Obedience; in which Caſe the Principles and the Motives of Religion would be exactly the ſame; and the Act of Obedience would be ſincere and pure, and of the ſame Kind with the Light of Reaſon from which it flows. Such Obedience as this is in the higheſt Degree rational and religious; and though Laws, both human and divine, are guarded with Hopes and Fears, yet the Workings of ſuch Hopes and Fears cannot add to the Religion of ſuch Obedience; unleſs you ſuppoſe that there is more Religion in being moved by our own Paſſions, than in being conducted by the clear Light of our Reaſon and Underſtanding.

When once a Man has attained to the Knowledge of God, and of the Relation he bears to him, and feels the natural Obligations from thence ariſing to love, honour, and obey his Maker; though other Conſiderations may come in with good Effect to incline his Will to his Duty, yet no other Conſiderations can add to his Obligations, or make the Duty of Obedience more a Duty, or more an Act of true Religion, than it was before: for he who honours and obeys God, becauſe he knows that God

ought

ought to be honoured and obeyed by him, his Creature and his Servant, acts upon as high and as true a Principle of Religion, as a rational Mind is capable of.

The *ſecond* Principle of Duty, which is the Love of our Neighbour, may be conſidered in two Views, either as it reſults from the common Relation which all Men bear to God, or from the Relation which Men bear to each other: in the firſt View, to love our Neighbour is properly a religious Act, and Part of the Duty we owe to God; and he knows but little of God and his Attributes, who cannot from thence diſcern that to do good to our Fellow-Creatures is an acceptable Part of Obedience to him; that to vex, injure, and oppreſs them, is injurious to him, the common Father and Maker of all Men.

But beſides this, could we ſuppoſe Men to forget God, without forgetting themſelves, and loſing the Reaſon with which they are endowed; the very Light of Reaſon, aſſiſted by the natural Faculty of what is right and wrong, would oblige Men to uſe each other with Juſtice, and with Tenderneſs: for Reaſon itſelf is a Law to a reaſonable Mind: and in the preſent Caſe,

you

you muſt either ſay, that it would be altogether as reaſonable an Act in a Man, who believes not in God, to murder an innocent Child, as to nouriſh and ſupport it; or you muſt allow that Reaſon alone in this Caſe makes a Difference, and creates ſuch an Obligation as a reaſonable Mind muſt ever be ſenſible of, and inclined to follow. I would not call this religious Obedience, but it is Obedience to the Law of our own Minds; and could we be ſo ſtupid as to forget the Hand which planted this Law in our Hearts, yet whilſt the Law itſelf lives in us; that is, as long as we continue to have Reaſon and Senſe, ſo long ſhall we feel the Obligations we are under in Obedience to it; ſo long ſhall we be diſſatisfied with ourſelves, for acting contrary to what we ſee, and know, and feel to be right and becoming.

But join theſe two Conſiderations together, and you ſee into the very Source of all the Obligations a Man can be under to do good to his Fellow Creatures. We can conſider Men only as they ſtand related to us, or as they and we ſtand equally related to God, our common Father; and under theſe Views we may diſcover whatever we owe

owe to Man for his own Sake, or for the Sake of God who made him; and diſcern the whole Compaſs of our Duty with Reſpect to the *ſecond* great Branch of it, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf.*

Let us then proceed to the *third* Thing, *viz.* the Love of ourſelves, and our own Happineſs; and conſider how far this will and ought to influence our religious Obedience.

It is very evident from the common and univerſal Senſe of Mankind, that the Deſires of Life and Happineſs are Impreſſions which come from the Author of Nature; and conſequently that to follow theſe Impreſſions, and to act in Purſuance of them, is according to Nature, and agreeable to the Will of God, the Author of them. It is reaſonable for a Man to be concerned for his own Happineſs; and ſince the Will of God can never contradict right Reaſon, it is conſonant to the divine Will for Men to act upon this Principle, the Care of themſelves and of their own Welfare. This Concern for our own Happineſs is a very ſtrong Principle of Action in us, and when duly purſued, within its proper Bounds, a very juſtifiable one; and though in Strictneſs of

Speech

Speech it cannot be termed a Principle of Religion, becauſe the Reaſon of our own religious Obedience is not to be reſolved into Self-love; yet conſidering the ſtrict Union which God has made between our Happineſs and our Duty, the Concern for our own Happineſs, when duly regulated, will always be a powerful Principle of Action in Matters of Religion.

The natural Care and Concern therefore which all Men have for themſelves and their own Happineſs, is the great Source from which the Motives of Religion are deduced: and the Reaſon why this natural Principle of Action does often furniſh very powerful Motives to the Cauſe of Vice and Irreligion, is no other than this; that Men often, through the Corruption of their Affections, judge amiſs of their Happineſs, and purſue thoſe Things as pleaſant and profitable, which are really pernicious and deſtructive. In which Caſe Men are not to be blamed for purſuing their own Happineſs, but for the Corruption of their Hearts, which makes them place their Happineſs in the Things the moſt contrary to it. For ſince God made Man to be happy, and has endowed him with Reaſon, to diſcern wherein

wherein his true Happineſs does conſiſt, it muſt needs be agreeable to the Will of God, that Man ſhould endeavour to attain that Happineſs, for which he was intended. The Conſequence of which is, that it is no Blemiſh to our Obedience, that we are moved by the Conſiderations of that Happineſs, which God has made to be the Reward of it.

To judge rightly therefore of the Motives upon which Men act in their religious Concerns, we muſt judge of the Nature of the Happineſs they propoſe to themſelves; and this, I think, we may admit as a Rule in this Caſe; that as long as Men ſeek after that Happineſs which is natural and proper, and intended for them by God, ſo long they act upon Motives agreeable to the Will of God.

The Happineſs in which Men are capable of having any Share, or for which they have any Deſires, is either that which belongs to this World, or that which belongs to the World to come. That future Rewards are proper Incitements to Virtue and Religion, is plain from hence; that God has propoſed them as ſuch, and ſent his only and well beloved Son into the World, to bring *Life and Immortality to Light through*

through the Goſpel. But theſe future Rewards do not alter the Nature of Religion, or give God a better Title to our Obedience than he had before; they contain not the Reaſons and Evidences of the Obligations we were under to the Supreme Creator, but they are added as proper Movements to the Will and Affections of Men, and to raiſe their Minds above the Temptations of this World, which ſo eaſily beſet them. The particular Rewards promiſed in the Goſpel being Matter of divine Revelation, to reject them, is Want of Faith; to admit them, is an Act of Religion towards God, with reſpect to that Faith, which is the Foundation of our receiving them; but with reſpect to the Influence of the Rewards themſelves, they do not make any Thing to be a religious Duty, which is not ſo in itſelf; they do not make any Thing ceaſe to be Religion, which was Religion before.

As to the Happineſs of this preſent Life, we can, I think, as little queſtion whether God intended Men to be happy here, as we can, whether he intends them to be happy hereafter: the natural Deſires of Men after this Happineſs, the neceſſary Connection between Virtue and Happineſs, and the Good-

Goodneſs of God towards his Creatures, will not permit us to make any Doubt of it: and if God intended Men for Happineſs here, to purſue this Happineſs by the moſt juſtifiable Means, *i. e.* by the Means of Virtue and Religion, muſt needs be agreeable to his holy Will; and conſequently the Proſpect of the Peace and Tranquillity of this Life, is a proper Motive to Religion.

Under the old Law we find the Promiſes of this Life were expreſsly made to religious Obedience by God himſelf; a Demonſtration, I think, that the *Motives of this World* are not in their own Nature deſtructive of *religious* Obedience. Long Life, temporal Peace and Proſperity in the flouriſhing Condition of their Country, fruitful Seaſons, and plentiful Harveſts, are Inducements always propoſed to the *Jews* to keep the Commandments: nor may we pretend to ſay, that theſe Promiſes were peculiar, and only proper to the *Jews*, unleſs we think that it was peculiar to the *Jews* to deſire long Life, Proſperity, and Plenty: for Motives founded in natural Deſires muſt be as extenſive as the Deſires themſelves; and having been propounded by God as Motives of Religion to one Nation, it ſhews they are proper

proper for all. The *Jews* had indeed an expreſs Promiſe of temporal Felicity, if they continued obedient: other Nations, if they believe God to be the Governor of the World, muſt have Aſſurance of the like Reward; for to ſuppoſe God to govern the World, infers his Care of a religious obedient People: and therefore our Saviour gives it as an Inſtance of Want of Faith, where Men diſtruſt the Goodneſs of God in providing for them, whilſt they endeavour to ſerve him. But further; even under the Goſpel we are aſſured, that *Godlineſs has the Promiſes of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

To encourage ourſelves therefore in our Duty and Obedience, with the Hopes that God will reward us here with Life, Health, and Proſperity, is no Blemiſh to our Religion; but indeed is an Act of Faith in God, as Governor of the World; and a proper Inducement to make us, in all we ſay or do, to look up to him who is the Giver of every good and perfect Gift, both in this Life and in the next.

Our Saviour reckons but two general Heads of Religion, the *Love of God*, and the *Love of our Neighbour*; but the ſecond of

of theſe plainly infers another, the Love of ourſelves; for ſince we are to love our Neighbour as ourſelves, it is evident that we may and ought to love ourſelves. A corrupt and irreligious Affection can be no Rule of Duty; and if we are bound to love others according to the Meaſure of the Love we have for ourſelves, it is evident at leaſt that we *may*, conſiſtently with the Nature of Religion, love ourſelves as much as we are *bound* to love others: and ſince it is our Duty to promote the preſent Eaſe, and Happineſs, and Proſperity of our Neighbours, it muſt be agreeable to the Mind of our bleſſed Saviour, that we ſhould take the ſame Care of ourſelves: and if this be a lawful Care, it muſt needs be allowed, that it is never better employed than when it makes us obedient towards God, in Hopes of his Favour and Protection.

Having now, if not too largely, yet at leaſt as far as the preſent Occaſion will give Leave, endeavoured to clear the *firſt* Thing propoſed; I ſhall proceed to the *ſecond*; namely,

How plainly and evidently theſe Principles lead us to Works of Charity and Mercy.

He that oppreſſeth the Poor, ſays the wiſe King of Iſrael, *reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him, hath Mercy on the Poor.*

The Poor are the Creatures of God, not only as they are Men, but alſo as they are poor Men: the different Orders and Degrees of Men are from the Hand of God; and to deſpiſe or oppreſs a Man for being what God has thought fit to make him, is to reproach God: and if we have a true Honour for God, the common Father of both Rich and Poor, it will diſpoſe us to regard even the meaneſt of his Children. The Rich are the elder Brothers of the World; and as they ſhare the Eſtate of it among them, ſo is it incumbent on them to provide for the Neceſſities of the Reſt of the Family; which they can hardly neglect without renouncing the common Relation they have to one and the ſame Parent; ſo that to ſhew Mercy to the Poor, is a direct Way of paying Honour to God.

Beſides, Works of Mercy redound to the Honour of God, through the Praiſes and Thankſgivings of thoſe, who feel the Comfort and Relief of them. The Charity of the Rich, thrown into the Lap of the Poor, aſcends

aſcends up in more delightful Steams than the Incenſe of the Altar, and returns again in Showers of Bleſſings upon the Head of the Liberal. The unexpected Relief which the Indigent meet with, naturally creates in them a great Senſe of Providence, and of the Care of God over his Creatures; it raiſes them to a thankful Acknowledgment of his Regard towards them, and diſpoſes them to a religious Dependance on him in the Midſt of all their Diſtreſs. So that in this Senſe alſo Works of Charity tend to the Honour of God, as they promote a true Senſe of Religion in the World.

That the Good and Welfare of Men are directly conſulted by the charitable Hand, is too plain a Caſe to admit of any Proof: and great Pity it is, that there is any Room to doubt whether this End be always attained by the Liberality of well-diſpoſed Perſons: but ſo it is, that too great a Part of what is given in Charity in this rich and populous City, inſtead of being a Supply to the Want of Saints, is the Nouriſhment of idle and debauched Vagabonds: a Caſe the more to be lamented, becauſe the frequent Impoſtures of this Kind make good People diſtruſtful of all who aſk for Charity,

and ſometimes bring great Difficulties upon the well-deſerving Poor. Under theſe Circumſtances, we can no otherwiſe anſwer this End of Charity, the doing good to others, than by taking ſome Care to place our Charity right; and to diſtinguiſh between the truly Needy, and the idle Beggar, who lies in wait to intercept Charity, and to divert the Maintenance of the more deſerving. But however we may be impoſed on in this Reſpect, yet in that which follows, I truſt there is no Fear of being deceived; for though the wicked Receiver of Charity ſhall anſwer for his Guile and Hypocriſy, yet the Liberality of the Giver ſhall not go unrewarded: for,

Thirdly, By Works of Mercy and Charity, we make the beſt Proviſion for our own preſent and future Happineſs. This may be concluded by direct Inference from what has been already ſaid; for ſince Works of Mercy have ſo plain a Tendency to promote the Honour of God, we cannot doubt but that God will reward the Love and Obedience of ſuch as take Pleaſure therein. Add to this, the expreſs Promiſes of the Goſpel made to theſe good Works eſpecially; inſomuch that clothing the Naked,

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feeding the Hungry, giving Drink to the Thirſty, viſiting the Sick and the Priſoners in their Diſtreſs, are mentioned by our bleſſed Saviour, as chief Articles of Enquiry at the laſt great Day; and are put into the ſhort Deſcription which St. *James* has left us of *pure and undefiled Religion in the Sight of God*; add to this, I ſay, and we have all the Security that can be deſired or expected.

The final Retribution for this, and every other Work, muſt be expected from the Juſtice of God, in that Day in which he hath appointed to judge the World; but this hinders not but that we may juſtly hope for Part of our Reward in this Life. In the Chapter of the Text, the Apoſtle encourages the *Corinthians* to Liberality, by teaching them to expect a Return for it from God, in the Increaſe of their Stores, and a plentiful Harveſt of the good Fruits of the Earth: this Reward he earneſtly prays they may have:—*He that miniſtereth Seed to the Sower, both miniſter Bread for your Food, and multiply your Seed ſown.* The Apoſtle wrote to Chriſtians, and doubtleſs he made uſe of none but *Chriſtian Motives*; and upon his Authority we may venture to

promiſe to the charitable Chriſtian a ſuitable Reward, as well in the Bleſſings of this Life, as of that which is to come. But it is Time to proceed to the laſt Thing propoſed:

To ſhew how effectually theſe Conſiderations conſpire to recommend to us that good Work, for promoting of which, we are this Day met together in the Fear of God.

If to ſupply the temporal Wants of the Brethren, be a work redounding to the Honour of God; behold theſe numerous Objects before you, all wearing the Livery of Charity, not as a Badge of Servitude to any earthly Maſter, but as a Token that they and their Benefactors are equally Servants to God: nor are their preſent Wants and Neceſſities the only Concern of this pious Inſtitution; but a Foundation is laid for the conſtant Support of them and their Families, by training them up, and diſpoſing of them to ſuch uſeful Employments as may yield them a comfortable Maintenance for their Lives; ſo that this Charity, like the *Widow's Cruſe*, will always recruit itſelf; and Bread to be earned by theſe many Hands, in Time to come, ſhall be placed to the

the liberal Man's Account, as the Growth and Product of his Beneficence, and be a Memorial of his good Works daily renewed and offered up in the Sight of God.

But the ſupplying the temporal Wants of the Poor is not the only, nor the chief End of theſe Inſtitutions; they have another View, which more directly regards the Honour and Glory of God; the inſtructing of Youth in the Principles of Virtue and Religion, and teaching them to know God betimes, and the Obedience owing to him. And if providing for the temporal Wants of the Poor ſhall be eſteemed an Honour paid to God, how much more ſhall this Charity be ſo eſteemed, which is dedicated expreſsly to that End? the chief Buſineſs of which is, to fill the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings with the Praiſes of God, a Sacrifice which he will not deſpiſe. To inſtruct undiſciplined Youth in the Principles of Faith and Obedience, what is it but to extend the Dominion of God over his Creatures; to *turn the Hearts of the Diſobedient to the Wiſdom of the Juſt*, and to *make ready a People prepared for the Lord*; to conquer the Powers of Darkneſs, like good Soldiers of Chriſt; and to lay up in Store for our-

ſelves more than the Conqueror's Crown. But, *ſecondly*,

The Argument has the ſame Advantage with Reſpect to the *Good* of thoſe who are the immediate Objects of this Charity: it has this in common with other Charities, that it is a Supply for the Wants of the Poor; it has this above many others, that it is a Proviſion againſt future Wants; but its chief Glory is, that it is a Proviſion not only for the preſent Comforts of this Life, but alſo for the Happineſs of that Life which is eternal; by reſcuing the Poor from that Contagion of Vice to which they are ſo fatally expoſed, for Want of due Inſtructions in their Youth: it is this Want which has filled the Streets with idle Vagabonds and Beggars; many of whom know nothing of *the Lord who bought them*, except only his Name; nor had they known that, but merely for the Uſe of it in the common Forms of Begging. Laſtly,

As to yourſelves, the Encouragers, the Supporters of this good Work, God is your Reward: and as the Charity you are engaged in, has all the Marks of a juſt Regard to the Honour of God, and of a tender and Chriſtian Concern for the preſent and future

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Happineſs of your Brethren; ſo need you not doubt, but that the Promiſes of the Goſpel ſhall be juſtified unto you, both in this Life, and in that which is to come. Go on therefore, and faint not; if your Work be attended with Difficulties, they ſhall ſerve only to increaſe your Reward. Let it be the Care on your Part, *That your Good be not evil ſpoken of*; and if Offences come, (and they muſt needs come) *wo to them by whom they come.*

But that this Charity may in all Reſpects be above Reproach, and anſwer the Ends propoſed by the liberal Benefactors, I earneſtly recommend it to thoſe who have the immediate Care of theſe Children, to be watchful over their Behaviour, and conſtant and diligent in the Diſcharge of their own Duty. The Succeſs of this Charity depends in great Meaſure upon their Fidelity: Men of Fortune and Buſineſs in the World cannot attend ſo cloſely as to obſerve every Thing that paſſes; this Care therefore muſt reſt upon thoſe, who have more immediately the Inſpection of theſe Schools. And let them remember, that they receive the Pay of Charity; and that they cannot neglect their Duty, without adding this Aggravation

gravation to their Crime, the Abuſe of one of the nobleſt Charities of this Age.

And now, may that God, whoſe Honour you are labouring to promote, whoſe Children theſe are, who are ſupported and inſtructed by your Charity, proſper this Work in your Hands; and raiſe up freſh Supplies for the Adminiſtration of this Service: may he miniſter Bread for your Food, and multiply your Seed ſown, and increaſe the Fruits of your Righteouſneſs. *To him,* &c.

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DISCOURSE XIV.

JUDGES ii. 7.

And the People ſerved the Lord all the Days of Joſhua, and all the Days of the Elders that outlived Joſhua, who had ſeen all the great Works of the Lord, that he did for Iſrael.

THUS far all is well: God had been extremely gracious and merciful to *Iſrael*; and thoſe who had ſeen his Wonders, and had felt the Miſeries from which he had delivered them, retained a grateful Remembrance of his Goodneſs. But the Caſe quickly altered: no ſooner were the Men, who had ſeen the Works of the Lord, *gathered unto their Fathers*, but *there aroſe another Generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the Works which he had done for Iſrael: and the Children of Iſrael*

rael did Evil in the Sight of the Lord. The Effects of their departing from God their Deliverer, are deſcribed at the 14th Verſe. *And the Anger of the Lord was hot againſt Iſrael, and he delivered them into the Hands of the Spoilers that ſpoiled them, and he ſold them into the Hands of their Enemies round about, ſo that they could not any longer ſtand before their Enemies.*

You have now the Caſe of the *Iſraelites* fully before you. I wiſh it was a ſingular Caſe, and that the Reſt of the People of God ſtood clear from the like Imputation. If they do, happy are they; if they do not, they have great Reaſon to fear, that the ſame Cauſe will produce the ſame Effect; and that they likewiſe ſhall be ſold into the Hands of their Enemies.

It is but a melancholy Reflection to think, that the Miſbehaviour here charged upon the People of *Iſrael*, is almoſt a natural Effect of the preſent degenerate and corrupted State of Nature: we receive Benefits with great Warmth and Zeal of Gratitude, and we poſſeſs and enjoy them with great Coldneſs and Indifference; and too often with a total Forgetfulneſs of the Hand that beſtowed them. This Temper diſcovers itſelf in the common

common Affairs of Life, and the mutual Intercourſe that Men have with Men. Thoſe, who are able to help us, are courted and careſſed as long as we want their Aſſiſtance; are honoured and reverenced whilſt they afford it; and as ſoon as they have made us happy, we begin to think they did us but Juſtice, they gave us only what we had a Right to; and the Acknowledgments due to the Benefactor are paid to our own Merit and Deſert. By theſe Steps our Succeſs in the World, owing perhaps entirely to the Partiality our Friends had for us, and which ought to make us humble and thankful, leads us to two odious Vices, very incident to human Nature, though very unbecoming the Condition of it, Pride and Ingratitude.

Public Bleſſings make ſtill leſs Impreſſion on the Minds of Men, than private Beneſactions. Very few think of any Obligation lying upon themſelves, for the Good they enjoy in common with their Neighbours. The Peace and quiet Security procured by the Care and Protection of Government, is rarely reflected on as creating any Debt of Gratitude to thoſe who watch for us. When Tribute is demanded by thoſe to whom Tribute is due, Men are apt to conſider what they

they pay, as ſo much loſt out of their Property: whereas in Truth no Part of our Fortune makes a better Return to us, than that which is beſtowed to ſecure the whole, and to maintain Peace and Tranquillity in our Days.

What Miſchief this Temper of Ingratitude produces in private and in public Life, is but too manifeſt. Every Man almoſt has his Complaint againſt ſomebody, who has repaid his good Offices with Neglect and Contempt, perhaps too with Injuries; and in public Life one would imagine that Liberty was miſtaken for a Right to abuſe the Government; and that the Dignity of a free State conſiſted in acting without Regard or Reverence to thoſe who are at the Head of it.

But the Effects of this perverſe Diſpoſition acting in the Affairs of this Life, and among ourſelves, are Matters of light Complaint, compared with its Influence in Matters of Religion. We have all one great *Friend*, if we would acknowledge him, one great *Governor*, if we would regard him. But we are too apt to deal with GOD, as we do with the Reſt of our *Friends*; we intreat, we beg for his Aſſiſtance, when we are in Diſtreſs; and

and when we are relieved, we think but little of him.

The common Bleſſings of Providence are received and enjoyed by Multitudes, who ſeldom or never think of the Hand that ſupplies their Wants. The former and the latter Rain, and the plentiful Seaſons are aſcribed to I know not what Courſe of natural Cauſes: but ſuch Cauſes are meant, to which no Thanks are due; and this Notion, contrary to Reaſon and true Philoſophy, is the more readily embraced, becauſe it furniſhes Men with the good Things of the World, and lays them under no Obligations to the Author of them. St. *Paul* ſays, that God at no Time *left himſelf without Witneſs, in that he did good, and gave us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seaſons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladneſs.* But how has this Evidence been attended to? The conſtant and regular Supply of our Neceſſities makes us imagine that we have a Right to them by Preſcription, and that we have a Property in them as *Children* of the *Earth:* or, that if any Thing is owing to Wiſdom, it is to *our own* Wiſdom, in managing the *Ground* and the *Seaſons* to the beſt Advantage. And thus forgetting the Author of

every

every good Gift, and transferring the Honour due to him, to ourſelves, we do, in the Language of the Prophet, *Sacrifice unto our Net, and burn Incenſe to our Drag, becauſe by them our Portion is fat, and our Meat plenteous*, Hab. i. 16.

But however theſe common Bleſſings, which come to all without Diſtinction, are neglected and overlooked, one would imagine that ſignal Deliverances wrought in Favour of any People, and in which the Arm of the LORD is made bare, and viſible to every Eye, ſhould be had in perpetual Remembrance, and be tranſmitted with Sentiments of *Gratitude*, *Honour*, and *Religion* to the lateſt Poſterity.

But the Caſe is far otherwiſe!

The Hiſtory of the *Jews*, a People under the peculiar and viſible Government of Providence, is a Series of Rebellions and Revolts againſt GOD, who had frequently and miraculouſly delivered them from the Hands of their Enemies. In their Story the Counſels of GOD with Reſpect to them and their Neighbours are laid open; and we ſee plainly the Reſentment of God's Juſtice againſt a rebellious People, and in what Manner he raiſed the Nations round about them, to puniſh

niſh and diſtreſs them. From their Example we may learn to reckon with ourſelves; and, by conſidering our own Caſe, know what to fear, and what to hope, from the Juſtice and Mercy of GOD: for the Ways of Providence are unalterable, and the ſame Wiſdom and Juſtice which governed the *Jews*, governs all the People of the World. The Purpoſes of GOD are the ſame towards all Nations, though not ſo diſcernible and manifeſt as in the Hiſtory of the People of *Iſrael*. Profane Hiſtory preſents us many Inſtances of Nations ſubdued under the Hand of their Enemies, and fallen from a State of Pride and Sovereignty to the miſerable Condition of *Slavery* and *Captivity*. There the Hiſtory leaves us.—It acquaints us with the Facts, and the Politicians of the World are buſied in aſſigning Cauſes for the ſurpriſing Changes that have been in the Nations. Some diſcern great Wiſdom and Conduct on the Side of the Conquerors, and great Miſtakes and ill Management on the Side of the Unfortunate; and all agree to aſcribe in moſt Caſes, the Events and Succeſſes of War to the Number and Bravery of the Troops. But look into the *Sacred Hiſtory*, where the Counſels of GOD are diſ-

played by his holy Prophets, there will you ſee a plain Reaſon, why the favourite Nation, delivered moſt wonderfully and miraculouſly from the Slavery of *Egypt*, was ſold again into Slavery to the *Philiſtines*, and other heathen *Nations* around them. Had this Story been told in the common Way of Hiſtory, we ſhould have thought this People extremely weak or unfortunate, in that they had no ſooner eſcaped out of the Hands of the great and powerful *Kings* of *Egypt*, but they became *Vaſſals* and *Bondſmen* to the little *Princes* bordering upon *Canaan*. But ſee the Truth of the Caſe: they became extremely unfortunate, becauſe they were extremely wicked; their Proſperity was their Ruin, as it made them forget the LORD that bought them. And the Strength, which they relied on as their Security, betrayed them to their Deſtruction; for they had to deal with Him, *who ſaveth not Kings by the Multitude of an Hoſt, nor giveth the Battle to the Strong.*

Let no Man be ſo weak as to imagine that this Method of Providence was peculiar and confined to the *Jews*, and that other Nations were left to follow their own Imaginations, and that GOD regarded them not; for

for the contrary appears in the ſame *ſacred Hiſtory*, in which we have the Account of the *Jewiſh Nation*. The Counſels of GOD were not indeed ſo manifeſtly declared to other *Nations* by *Prophets* and *Meſſengers* from GOD; but the Methods of Juſtice were the ſame to all, and the *Nations* were left to Reaſon and Conſcience, thoſe great Lights given to all alike, to interpret the Conduct of Providence with Reſpect to themſelves. Were *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* deſtroyed by Chance? No: it was by a Fire from Heaven, commiſſioned to extirpate a wicked and profane People. Were the *Canaanites* overpowered by the Arms of *Iſrael?* Certainly not: but God, who had waited in Patience and Forbearance till the Meaſure of their Iniquity was full, delivered them up to Deſtruction. Enquire what became of the great Monarchies of *Aſſyria*, *Babylon*, and *Egypt:* you may ſee their Doom foretold by the Prophets. They were to be deſtroyed for their great *Idolatry* and *Corruption:* and the Prophecies have been ſo remarkably fulfilled, that they are a ſtanding Leſſon of Inſtruction to all *Nations*, who have Eyes to ſee, and Hearts to underſtand. Thus too it fared at laſt with the favourite People of

the *Jews:* they were often puniſhed in Mercy, and ſuffered to be miſerable, that they might become better. They were from Time to Time admoniſhed by the Prophets; and at laſt GOD ſent his *Son* to them; Him they ſlew and hanged on a Tree; and having filled up the Meaſure of their Iniquity, Vengeance purſued them; and ſuch Vengeance as aſtoniſhed the World, and does yet aſtoniſh it; for *there is no Miſery, like their Miſery.*

Final Puniſhments, whereby *Nations* are entirely rooted out, are of Uſe to us as Examples and Warnings to flee from the Wrath to come; otherwiſe they can do us no Service: for ſhould we ever fall into ſo wretched a Condition as to call down ſuch Judgments on our Head, who can deliver us from the Hand of the living GOD? But other Judgments, how ſharp and ſevere ſoever they may be, are the Effects of Mercy, and intended for our Correction.—When ancient and late Deliverances are forgotten, and have no Effect upon the Mind; when the Voice of GOD ſpeaking in his Law, by his Prophets, and by the Miniſters of his Word, is no longer attended to; nothing remains but to apply ſharper Remedies, or to permit the

the People to fill up the full Meaſure of their Iniquities, and to periſh in their Sins. —It is Mercy to prevent *this fatal* Evil, how corroding ſoever the Means, made Uſe of by Mercy, may prove. The Perverſeneſs and Corruption of Men's Hearts juſtify the Goodneſs and Equity of God in inflicting ſuch Puniſhments, and they muſt blame themſelves for not attending to the gentler and the kinder Calls of Providence.

Perhaps there may be no great Occaſion to juſtify before you the Ways of God towards the Children of *Iſrael*; we are all of one Opinion to condemn their Perverſeneſs and Ingratitude: ſo much eaſier is it, to detect the Faults of others, than to ſee and acknowledge our own!

But are we innocent from this great Offence?

Let us conſider our own Caſe: and ſurely we have great Reaſon to conſider it, now the Enemies of our *Religion* and *Liberty* appear with Triumph in our Land, and are in Poſſeſſion of one antient and powerful *Kingdom* united to the *Crown* of *England*.

Our unhappy Diviſions in *civil Matters* I chooſe to paſs over in Silence at this Time and Place; for I mean no Reproach to

any Man. And without doubt our Conduct towards GOD, and our Regard to his *holy Religion*, is the firſt and moſt intereſting Conſideration now before us.

It is well known that the People of *Iſrael* were the choſen, the peculiar People of God; and diſtinguiſhed from the Reſt of the *Nations*, by a ſpecial Providence directing them and their Affairs. If you conſider this as the Effect of Partiality, and a weak Fondneſs for one Set of Men more than another, you injure the *Attributes* of *God*, who acts by *Wiſdom* and *Juſtice* in all his Dealings, and is no Reſpecter of Perſons. The Houſe of *Abraham* was called for the Sake of true *Religion*; to preſerve the Knowledge of the one *God* among themſelves, to propagate it among the *Nations*, and to prepare the Way for introducing into the World, under proper Circumſtances, that *Seed*, in which all the *Nations* of the Earth were to be bleſſed. As they were choſen for theſe great Purpoſes, ſo whenever they acted contrary to them, they ceaſed to be the choſen People, and were treated as Enemies and Rebels.

We are apt enough to boaſt of the Purity of our *Religion*, and our *Reformation* from the Errors and Corruptions of the *Church*

of

of Rome; and to flatter ourſelves that we alſo are a peculiar People of God, and ſet up by Providence to be the *Bulwark* of the *Proteſtant Religion*. And indeed, if we judge from the many Deliverances we have had, when our *Religion* and our *Liberties* were in utmoſt Danger, we have great Reaſon to acknowledge the Care and Protection of Heaven over us. But remember ſtill that we too are choſen to profeſs and maintain the Truth of God's holy *Goſpel*, and to bear our Teſtimony againſt the Corruptions, which have prevailed over a great Part of the *Chriſtian* World. If, inſtead of acting up to this Part aſſigned us by Providence, we grow careleſs and indifferent to our holy *Profeſſion*, and ſuffer a Spirit of Irreligion to prevail over the Nation, we forfeit our Title to God's Protection; we are no longer the choſen People, and muſt expect to be treated as Enemies and Deſerters.

Our *preſent* Situation is attended with Fears and uneaſy Apprehenſions; and if we look back and conſider from whence we are fallen, we may ſee but too much Reaſon to ſuſpect that our Fears are well grounded. How has this Nation been bleſſed with the Light of the Goſpel! How wonderfully

and how often has it been reſcued from Danger, when to human Appearance there was no Help at Hand! Scarcely had the *Reformation* taken Root among us, but a *Popiſh Queen*, made cruel by *Bigotry* and *Superſtition*, aſcended the *Throne*; and applied the *only ſtrong Argument* of *Popery*, Fire and Faggot, to extinguiſh the Light that was breaking in upon us. Not only the *civil Powers* of this Country were in the Hands that meant to deſtroy the *Reformation*, but they were ſupported and united to the Powers of *Spain*, whoſe *Prince* was become a Partner of the *Throne* of *England*; who lived to deſtroy (not in this Country, bleſſed be God, but in his own Dominions) *Thouſands* and *Tens* of *Thouſands* on Account of *Religion*.—Such were the Powers under which the *Reformation* here, ſtill in its *Infancy*, was to ſtruggle. It is painful to think of the Miſeries of that Time; but think of them we ought, and bleſs God for the noble *Examples* of Conſtancy and *Chriſtian* Courage, left by thoſe whom he raiſed up to bear Teſtimony, at the Expence of their Lives, to the Truth of his *Religion*. Had this Reign been long and proſperous, it is highly probable that *Philip* of *Spain* had left this Country

Country in the ſame Condition he left his own; where the *Inquiſition* rules with lordly and uncontroulable Power over the Conſciences and over the Fortunes of the People. But God, in whoſe Hands are the Iſſues of Life and Death, made Way for a *Proteſtant Princeſs* to aſcend the *Throne*; in whoſe long and glorious Reign the *Reformation* took deep Root, and the *Eſtabliſhment* of this *national Church* was perfected. A Work of great *Wiſdom* and *Piety*, and ſo eſteemed by the *Proteſtant Churches* abroad, however unhappily ſome among ourſelves have forſaken her *Communion*.

The *Reign* of this glorious Princeſs was almoſt a continual *Scene* of Deliverances from foreign *Invaſions*, and *Diſturbances* at home. And notwithſtanding ſhe was diſtreſſed on every Side, by *Bulls* and *Curſes* from *Rome*, by *Armadas* from *Spain*, by *Rebellions* in *England* and *Ireland*, ſhe left this *Church* and *Nation* in Peace and Security: ſo wonderfully did the Hand of God appear in our Preſervation.

Peace and Security under a weak Government which ſucceeded, produced by Degrees a Corruption in Principles and Manners, which ended at laſt in the Ruin of this

this Church and Nation, and the Deſtruction of a virtuous Prince worthy of a far better Fate. With him fell all our Hopes of *Order* and *Government* in *Church* and *State*; Anarchy and Confuſion uſurped the Throne; and Religion was ſo divided into an almoſt infinite Number of diſagreeing SECTS, that the true one could hardly be found in the Crowd.

But whilſt we are under this thick *Cloud*, HE, who can bring Light out of Darkneſs, did, againſt all the Hopes of human Probability, reſtore us to our happy Conſtitution in *Church* and *State*; not by Force of *Arms*, or the Power of Princes, but by over-ruling the Paſſions of Men; ſo that even *they* became Inſtruments in reſtoring theſe *Bleſſings*, who had been greatly concerned in deſtroying them.

It will be wronging the Nation to ſay that this Deliverance at the Reſtoration was not received with great Joy and Pleaſure. The Joy indeed was exceſſive; and, as the Caſe too often happens, left little Room for ſober and ſerious Reflections. The Hearts of Men being ſet open to the Impreſſions and Tranſports of Joy, ſoon grew ſenſual; and the Proſperity of the Nation broke out into

into *Luxury*, and into all the Vices which naturally attend it. The Senſes of Religion decayed; and the very Appearances of it were ſuſpected, as a Remnant of the Hypocriſy with which the late Times had been charged. And if we may judge by the Performances of the *Stage*, which are formed to the Taſte of the People, there never was a Time when Lewdneſs, Irreligion, and Profaneneſs were heard with more Patience.

But let us conſider, what Fruit the Nation had of theſe Things. I ſhall paſs over all the Calamities of that Time, which were many, and mention only that, which is the Cauſe and Foundation of all we fear at preſent. In the next Reign then, ſee Popery once more exalted to the *Throne* of *England*, and working to deſtroy the Religion and Liberties of the People; not by Art and Cunning and leiſurely Steps, but by open and avowed Attempts upon our Conſtitution. The Laws for Defence of our Religion were ſilenced by a diſpenſing Power; *Papiſts* were placed on the *Bench*, on the *Seat* of *Judgment*, and at the Head of *Colleges* in our *Univerſities*. Men's Hearts ſunk for Fear, and the Torrent ſeemed to carry all before it. One happy Effect indeed it had; it awakened

awakened Men to a ſober Senſe of themſelves and their Condition. When they were *put in Fear*, they ſoon found *themſelves to be but Men*; and they did the only reaſonable Thing they could do, apply to God for Protection. The Zeal of the Nation at that Time, for the pure uncorrupted *Doctrines* of the *Goſpel*, in Oppoſition to the Errors of Popery, was perhaps greater than ever it had been from the Days of the *Reformation*. The Paſtors and their Flocks were equally animated with a Conſtancy and a Courage above Temptation. And the *Clergy* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, under all the Fears and Apprehenſions that daily threatened them, maintained the *Doctrines* of the *Reformation*, with ſuch Learning, Ability, and Integrity, as did them Honour both at home and abroad.

Thus were the Hearts of the People turned as the Heart of one Man: nor was it in vain they ſought the *Lord*; for, by a wonderful Series of Providence, he delivered them from their Diſtreſs. And we have ſeen for many Years the *Crown* upon the Head of Proteſtant Princes, the natural Guardians of the Religion and Liberties of this Country.

If

If we have made right Uſe of this laſt Deliverance, let us fear no *Change*; for GOD will not forſake us, till we forſake him. But the Proſpect before us, the Danger that draws near to us, call upon us to act uprightly with ourſelves; and not to deceive our Hearts with Hopes that GOD will remember us, if we have forgot him, and the great Things he has done for us.

Our Hiſtories will always remind us of the great Deliverances this Nation has had, and we cannot forget them; nor did the *Jews* forget the Wonders wrought in the Land of *Egypt*, and the Redemption of their *Anceſtors* from *Captivity*. The hiſtorical Remembrance of the Facts *they had*; and *we have it*. The Charge againſt the *Jews* expreſſed frequently by their forgetting God, is the ſame which St. *Paul* brings againſt the heathen World: *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations; and their fooliſh Heart was darkened.*

Do we ſtand clear of this Charge? I wiſh to God we did.

Let not *me* be the Accuſer of my Nation, but let every Man recollect what he has heard, and read, and ſeen, within the Compaſs

paſs of a few Years. Surely the Goſpel of *Chriſt Jeſus* was never treated with greater Malice and Contempt, by *Jews* or *Heathens*, than it has been in this *Chriſtian* Country. Think not that I am condemning a ſober Enquiry into the Truth of Religion: God forbid. But what ſhall we ſay, for the undiſguiſed Profaneneſs, and even Blaſphemy that has ſwarmed from the Preſs! Many Inſtances might be given; but *one* can never be forgotten; where the nobleſt and moſt exalted *Hymn* of *Chriſtian* Devotion known to this *Church*, or any *Church* in the World, in which *Angels* and the bleſſed *Spirits* above join with us, has been perverted to the higheſt Impiety and Blaſphemy, that ever the Wickedneſs or Malice of Man's Heart could conceive. This and other Crimes of the ſame Nature are indeed chargeable on the Authors: but how deplorable muſt the State of a Nation be, when Men find Encouragement to provide ſuch Entertainment for the Publick?

Look into common Life, not to pry into the ſecret Faults of Men, but to ſee what is become of that Senſe of Religion, which once animated the People. When *Popery* was breaking in upon us, our *Churches* were crowded;

crowded; and unhappy was the Man, who by Sickneſs, or any real Neceſſity, was prevented in his Attendance in the Houſe of the LORD. Is it ſo now? Is not *Sunday* become a Day of Diverſion to the *Great Ones*, and a Day of Idleneſs and Lazineſs to the *Little Ones?* And has not this been manifeſtly followed by a great Increaſe of great Wickedneſs and Violence among the lower People? *Theft* and *Robbery*, which uſed to be ſecret Crimes, now appear armed in our *Streets*; and are ſupported by Numbers ſtrong enough to defy the Power of the Magiſtrate. The unruly Paſſions of Men muſt be governed either by Force, or by Religion. Force cannot watch at all Doors to prevent further Miſchief; but Religion is a *Centinel* placed in every Heart, to guard it againſt Wickedneſs; and it is but a natural Conſequence for Men to grow violent and injurious to others, in Proportion as their Senſe of Religion decays.

But amidſt this Ruin of Virtue and Religion, one Thing there is, that ſtill may be thought Matter of Comfort; that the *Nation* is generally averſe to *Popery:* but it is ſome Abatement *even* to this Comfort, to conſider that the Fear of *Popery* is not always

ways a Concern for the Purity of the *Goſpel*, but a Fear merely of the Powers of a *Popiſh Church*. Thoſe who have the leaſt Religion, and are grown wild with Notions of Liberty, have Reaſon to be apprehenſive of eccleſiaſtical *Courts* and *Inquiſitions* under the Direction of *Popery*. But in this there is no Virtue or Merit; though it may be perhaps an happy Circumſtance at *preſent*, that there is *ſomething* in *Popery*, for thoſe to be afraid of, who have no Regard for Religion.

But in the mean Time has not *Popery* been daily getting Ground on us, by the artful and unregarded Inſinuations of the *Adverſary*; and by Applications of another Kind, which do indeed but little Honour to the *Converts*, or the *Converters?* The Price, at which a Man may ſell the *Proteſtant* Religion, is become almoſt a ſtated and well known *Sum*; and there are known *Markets*, in which a Man may ſell the *Faith* in which he was born and bred. Such new purchaſed Proſelytes make no great *Figure*; for this Method indeed has no Effect, but upon the loweſt People. And conſidering how improper an Application this is to the *Conſcience*, there is Ground to ſuſpect, that it is made

made Uſe of rather to raiſe Recruits againſt a proper Time, than in Hopes to make real *Converts*. I wiſh they may not ſoon feel the Effects of this Management ſo long connived at.

But to return to ourſelves: To prevent this, and whatever elſe we may apprehend from the Danger and Diſpleaſure of God, let us ſeek the Lord in our Diſtreſs; and, by acknowledging our own Unworthineſs, and the Abuſe of former Mercies, render ourſelves Objects of his Goodneſs and Forgiveneſs. We have but too exactly copied the Behaviour of the *Jews* in their Days of Proſperity; let us learn of them likewiſe in their Adverſity, and cry unto God for Help againſt our Enemies. Let us ſet a due Value upon the Bleſſings beſtowed on us, and walk worthy of the Light of the Goſpel which has ſhone among us; that our Conduct and Behaviour may bear Teſtimony to the Truth which we profeſs.

And as in all the Diſpenſations of Providence towards us, it is expected from us, that we ſhould make Uſe of the Means which God hath put in our Power, for our own Defence and Safety; let us on this Occaſion with Cheerfulneſs, and the Hearts of

Men who truſt in GOD, be ready to employ our *Perſons* and our *Fortunes* in the Defence of our KING and COUNTRY, and the *happy Conſtitution* in *Church* and *State*, under which we live. Let every Man do his Part: he who can do leaſt, can pray for the Peace of *Jeruſalem*. Every Man may reform One, that is himſelf, and fill up perhaps that Number of the Righteous, for the Sake of which the *City* may be ſaved.

In a Word, the Time calls upon us to be ſerious; to think of GOD, and of OURSELVES; and, according to the Advice of the Pſalmiſt, with which I ſhall diſmiſs you, *to ſtand in Awe and ſin not, to commune with our own Heart, and in our Chamber, and be ſtill; to offer the Sacrifice of Righteouſneſs, and to put our* Truſt *in the* LORD.

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